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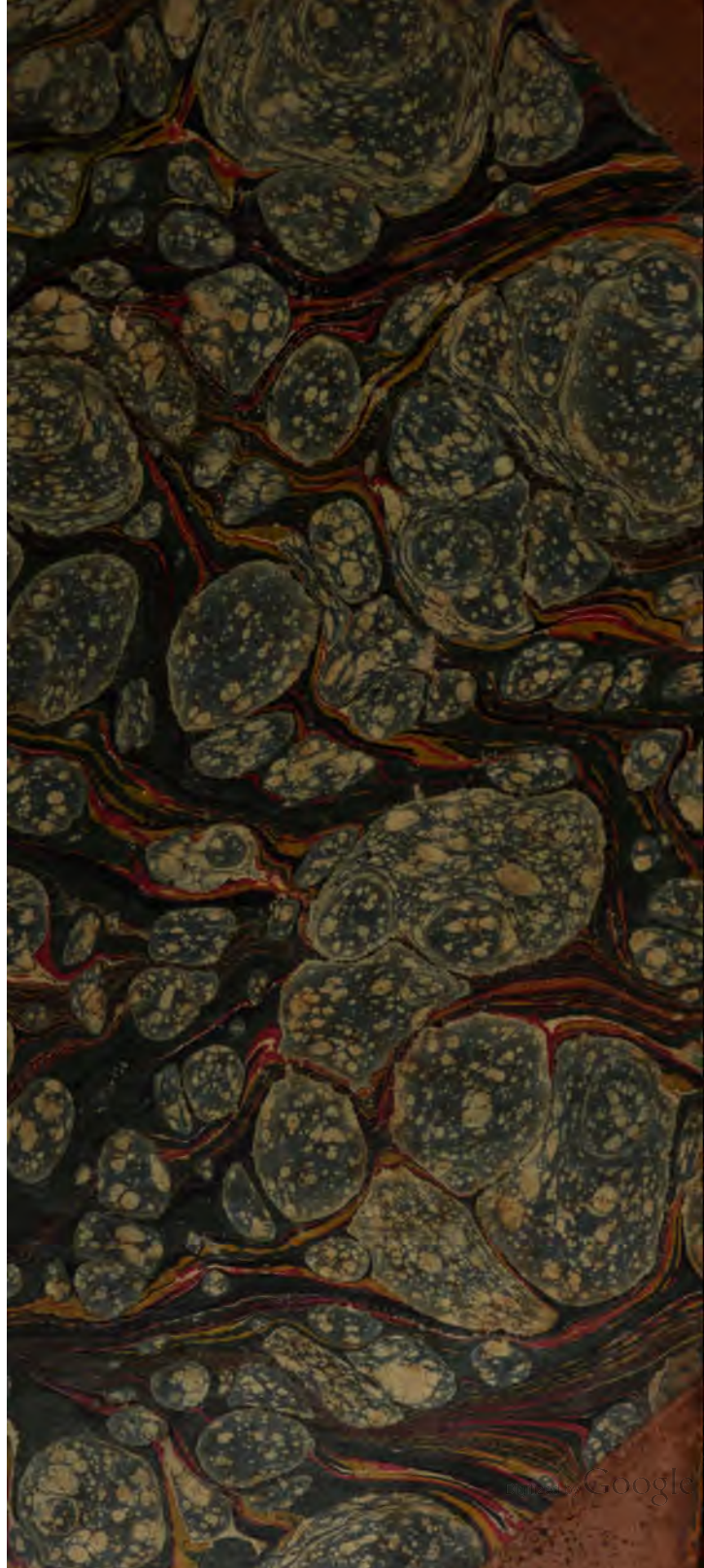
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v. 4. 1827.
THE ESSENCE

OF

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY,

CONTAINED IN A

SERIES OF OBSERVATIONS

ON

A PROTESTANT CATECHISM,

AND IN

A LETTER TO A NOBLE LORD.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM HENRY COOMBES, D. D.

LONDON :

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1827.

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W. WILSON, PRINTER, 67, SKINNER-STREET, LONDON.

TO THE
RIGHT REV. FATHER IN GOD,
DR. PETER BERNARDIN COLLINGRIDGE,
BISHOP OF THESPLÆ,
AND VICAR APOSTOLIC IN THE WESTERN DISTRICT—
A PRELATE DISTINGUISHED BY GREAT PIETY, A CONSIDERABLE DEPTH OF
THEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, AND A PATERNAL ATTENTION TO
THE FLOCK CONFIDED TO HIS CARE—

THE FOLLOWING PERFORMANCE IS,
WITH SENTIMENTS OF THE HIGHEST RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION,

Inscribed,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S OBEDIENT SERVANT,
AND DEVOTED SUBJECT IN CHRIST,

W. H. COOMBES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following performance has been occasioned by the indiscreet zeal of the Vicar of a neighbouring parish ; who, on finding that some of his parishioners frequented the chapel of the writer, thought proper to present them with a collection of small pamphlets and tracts, in which the Catholic religion is distorted and disfigured, by the usual mode of misrepresentation and calumny. The most moderate, or rather the least exceptionable, of these tracts, the writer has deemed it a duty critically to examine, and to review at full length. He has accordingly reprinted the whole performance in separate portions, and appended his own observations at the close of each subject thus brought under discussion. Such a plan even bigotry itself must deem both fair and manly ; as it exhibits both sides of the question, and furnishes an opportunity of procuring for each party an impartial hearing. On this candid and legitimate principle of natural equity, this mode has been adopted,—a principle which was familiar even to the Greek and the Roman ; as we learn from their favourite axioms:—

Τὸ ὁμοίως ἀμφὶν ἀκροῦσθαι.

Audi alteram partem.

If these pages should elicit any reply, the writer begs to declare his deliberate purpose, that nothing but fair argument and real learning shall induce him to notice the performance of any opponent. Should the ordinary, the disingenuous, and the ignoble arts of misrepresentation and slander be brought into action, he intends to regulate his conduct by the sentiment of Menander, who has elegantly observed, that *in many instances silence becomes an appropriate reply*.

Πολλοῖς ἀπόκρισις ἡ σιωπή τυγχάνει.

Shepton Mallet, March 7, 1827.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CONCERNING THE

RESPECTIVE TENETS

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

AND THE

CHURCH OF ROME,

WITH

OBSERVATIONS RESPECTIVELY ANNEXED TO EACH QUESTION AND ANSWER.

QUESTION I.

How doth the Church of England differ from the Church of Rome?

ANSWER.

The Church of England keeps close to the ancient creeds, commonly called the Apostles', the Nicene, and that of Athanasius: the Church of Rome hath added new articles of faith to these ancient creeds, which we reject.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE church of England, in the eighth of the Thirty-nine Articles, certainly *professes* to admit the three creeds here named; but this admission clearly decides the contest between the two churches. For in the Apostles' creed we have these words, (I believe) *the holy Catholic church*;

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in the Nicene creed, we read, *and (I believe) one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic church*; in the concluding part of that of St. Athanasius, we find the following clause: *This is the Catholic faith, which unless each one shall faithfully and firmly hold, he cannot be saved.* All these creeds, with the above-mentioned clauses, were true at every period before the era called the Reformation, as much as at any other time; and from them it incontestibly appears, that Christ had *always* on earth a church, distinguished by these marks of unity, of holiness, of catholicity, and apostolicity. Of this same church, it is equally clear, that our Redeemer says, Matt. xvi. 18, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*; and again, Matt. xxviii. 20, *and lo! I am with you all days to the end of the world*: and in St. John, xvi. 13, he assures us, that the divine Spirit shall *teach all truth*. Now how is it possible that a church thus holy, both with respect to its founder and its doctrine—a church thus built, thus protected, and thus supported, at every period of time, by supernatural assistance, should fall into impious and damnable errors, and need a thorough reformation? How can any human being in his senses venture to declare, in the presence of God, that he admits a holy Catholic church, under the perpetual protection of our Redeemer, and still impiously to assert, with the homily on the peril of idolatry, admitted and

sanctioned by the thirty-fifth of the Thirty-nine Articles, that all Christendom has been drowned in the most abominable idolatry for eight hundred years and more? This is a dark and hideous inconsistency, which never can admit of a satisfactory explanation. In fact, the real difference between the Catholic and the Protestant is, that the former places an unlimited reliance on the words and promises of his Redeemer; the latter depends on *the supposed failure of these promises*. The Catholic believes, that the gates of hell will never prevail against the church, because Christ has given a solemn assurance to this effect; the Protestant, in spite of this assurance, roundly and unhesitatingly declares, that the gates of hell have actually prevailed against the Church, by her melancholy fall into every species of error and corruption. Hence it is apparent, that the Catholic honours Christ, by implicitly admitting the truth of his assurance, but that the Protestant refuses him that homage, which is due to his infinite power and veracity. It is true therefore to say, that the admission of these creeds, coupled with the clear and incontestible declarations of our Redeemer, decides the controversy between the two churches.

QUESTION II.

When did the Church of Rome add these new articles of faith?

ANSWER.

For the greatest part of them in the Council of Trent, and particularly in the new Confession of Faith, compiled and published by Pope Pius IV. about a hundred years ago.

OBSERVATIONS.

As to the charge brought against the Catholic church, of adding *new articles of faith* to the ancient creeds, it is entirely without foundation. The Catholic church certainly does propose to the faithful many articles, which are not *expressed* in the ancient creeds; but this circumstance by no means supports the charge of adding *new articles* to these creeds; otherwise the Protestant must incur the same imputation, for admitting baptism and the Lord's supper, with many other points, which are not found in those venerable documents. The Catholic church, ever mindful of her trust, coins no new articles of faith, nor proposes any such thing to the faithful; but, ever assisted by the divine Spirit, agreeably to the promises of Christ before referred to, she claims the authority of deciding what has always been considered a matter of

divine faith, and what has been treated as a matter of opinion. On this ground, Pope Pius IV. after the termination of the council of Trent, published his celebrated profession of faith, *not about a hundred years ago*, as the catechist has asserted, but two hundred and sixty-two years from the present period. In performing this work, the pastors of the church, and particularly the supreme pastor, act in conformity to the injunction given by the Spirit of God¹, *Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

¹ Acts xx. 28.

QUESTION III.

What is the reason the Church of England doth not receive those new articles of faith?

ANSWER.

1. Because they are not to be found in the word of God.
2. Because many of them are contrary to the word of God.
3. No church in the world hath power to make new articles of faith.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE articles under consideration, which are by no means new, are founded either on the word of God, or on the ancient and apostolical traditions of the church. That any of them are contrary to the word of God, is a calumny, which shall be refuted in its proper place. It is scarcely necessary to repeat, that the Catholic church has never claimed the power of making new articles of faith.

She ever remembers the promise of her divine Spouse, who declared that *all truth* should be communicated to his church through his apostles; and of the truths thus taught, she deems herself the authorized depository, and the faithful guardian. When, therefore, she directs the faithful to receive any article of faith before undefined, she only unfolds and proposes what had been communicated to her by the divine

Spirit, agreeably to a promise clearly made ; or she applies to a particular case a general principle, on which she was fully authorized to act. Thus the protracted and violent dispute concerning the baptism of heretics was finally adjusted by the church, agreeably to apostolic tradition, of which she is the faithful guardian ; and, on a similar principle, many books of Scripture, concerning which doubts had been entertained, have been received as inspired writings ; because the church interposed that authority, which she had derived from her heavenly founder, of maintaining the faith inviolate—of separating what was genuine from what was fictitious—and of preserving, in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, that order without which no establishment can subsist. On what other principle does the pious catechist believe the *Revelation of St. John*, or the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, to be parts of real Scriptures ? or does he charge the Catholic church with framing *new articles of faith*, when she directed those performances, which were once deemed to be of dubious authority, to be considered as canonical books ? Let him consider these striking points, and desist from misrepresentation.

On the nature of the general charge given to the church, to maintain the deposite of faith, St. Vincent of Lerins thus beautifully expatiates : “ What is a deposite ? It is that which is entrusted to you, not that which is the fruit of your

invention ; it is what you have received, not what you have devised ; it is a matter, not of ingenuity, but of learning ; it is not a private assumption of authority, but an affair of public tradition ; a thing transmitted to you, not produced by you ; a concern in which you are not to pass for the author, but the guardian ; not the founder, but the disciple ; not the leader, but the follower¹."

¹ I cannot resist the temptation of transcribing the original of this beautiful passage, for the gratification of the learned reader :—

" Quid est depositum ? id est, quod tibi creditum est, non quod a te inventum ; quod accepisti, non quod excogitasti ; rem non ingenii, sed doctrinæ ; non usurpationis privatæ, sed publicæ traditionis ; rem ad te perductam, non a te prolatam ; in quâ non auctor debes esse, sed custos ; non institutor, sed sectator ; non ducens, sed sequens."—*St. Vincent. Com-monitor. contra Hær. c. xxvii.*

QUESTION IV.

What and which are the new articles of faith the Church of Rome hath added to the ancient creeds?

ANSWER.

Some of the principal are these following:—

1. That the apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, *i. e.* of their church, are most firmly to be admitted and embraced, *i. e.* as they explain it, with divine faith, and with the same affection of piety that is due to the Holy Scriptures.
2. That there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ, and necessary to the salvation of mankind, though not all of them necessary to every man, *viz.* Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony.
3. That all and every thing which was defined and declared about justification by the Council of Trent, ought to be embraced and received.
4. That in the mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the quick and dead.
5. That in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is a conversion made of the whole substance of bread into his body, and of the whole substance of wine into his blood; which conversion that church calls Transubstantiation.
6. That under either kind or species only, whole and entire Christ, and the true sacrament, is received; and by consequence, laymen are justly denied the cup in the sacrament.
7. That there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.
8. That the saints who reign together with Christ, are to be worshipped and invoked.

9. That the relics of these saints are to be venerated.
10. That the images of Christ, and the mother of God, as also of other saints, are to be had and retained, and due honour and veneration to be bestowed on them.
11. That the power of indulgences was left by Christ in his church, and that their use is most wholesome to Christian people.
12. That the Roman church is the holy Catholic and Apostolic church, and the mother and mistress of all churches.

OBSERVATIONS.

ALL these articles, which are here denominated new, form the subject of discussion in the following pages; and if the reader will give a due attention to the Catholic answers here subjoined, the writer, with full reliance on the grace of God, and the justice of his cause, pledges himself to give a full, clear, and satisfactory explanation on every point.

QUESTION V.

Why must not the Traditions the Roman Church boast of, be received with divine faith, nor with the same pious affection that is due to the Holy Scriptures ?

ANSWER.

1. This were to make them as necessary as Scripture ; and to make the traditions as necessary as the written word of God, is to accuse the written word of God of imperfection, as if all things necessary to salvation were not contained in it, contrary to Psalm x. 7 ; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17.
2. The traditions of the Church of Rome, many of them are so far from being apostolical, that they are false, and, at the best, uncertain.
3. Most of the traditions of the Church of Rome cannot be apostolical, because they have not been received in all ages, by all churches, and in all places, which is the true character of apostolical traditions.
4. Why should others be obliged to receive all their traditions, some of which are very uncertain, when they themselves reject traditions which are more certain, such as the tradition of communicating infants, and others ?
5. We receive them not, because we see their sinister design in urging traditions, which is, to make that an article of faith by tradition, which cannot be proved to be so by the written word of God.
6. If traditions (not bottomed in the written word) must be received with divine faith, then our faith must be built on the testimony of the church, as divine and infallible, which is absurd.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE Catholic church, with the utmost reverence for the Scripture as the word of God, still main-

tains, that this sacred word is to be found not only in what is written, but in the unwritten law, preserved in apostolical tradition. The passage referred to by the catechist¹, by no means militates against this doctrine; but rather, evidently confirms the Catholic principle, that Scripture is not interpreted by private authority, but by the pastors of the church. For the commendations of the apostle cannot refer to the New Scripture, which was then but partially in existence, but must relate to the Old principally, with which Timothy had been acquainted from his youth. Then he observes, that all Scripture is profitable for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*; expressions which by no means imply, that the written word, interpreted by each individual, is the sole rule of faith; but, on the contrary, that the Scripture is extremely useful, when employed by those who have authority over others, for the important purposes of reproof and correction.

In favour of tradition, it may safely be asserted, that no commission whatever was given by Christ to the apostles to *write*, but to *teach* and *preach* only; that for a length of time, they *literally* complied with this injunction, and diffused the Christian faith only by oral instruction; and that when they began to deviate from this plan, their writings, instead of embracing a regular

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17.

system of religion, of morality, and of sacred laws and ordinances, were *purely occasional*, and called for by *accidental circumstances*. On this account they are clearly silent on many points of essential importance. How is it possible to ascertain from the Scripture itself, that the sacred volume really contains the word of God? Internal evidence is clearly an insufficient criterion: even the external testimony of men, *not authorized to pronounce on the question*, cannot confer on it a divine authority. The Epistles of St. Barnaby and of St. Clement breathe an apostolical spirit, little inferior in appearance to those of St. Paul¹; and how are we to ascertain that they are not to be considered as a part of the written word?

Many books of Scripture are rejected by Protestants as apocryphal; the infidel discards the whole with scorn and derision; and by what means are we to establish *their authority as containing the Divine word*? By no other than by the authority of that church, which our Redeemer has commanded us to hear², and which St. Paul pronounces to be the *pillar and foundation of truth*³. This consideration made St. Augustine exclaim, "I would not believe the Gospel, were I not induced to do it by the authority of the Catholic church⁴."

¹ See Pat. Apostol. edit Russel, tom. i. ² Matt. xviii. 17.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 15. ⁴ Contra Epist. Fundamen. c. 5.

In addition to this preliminary step, in ascertaining what is and what is not canonical Scripture, many questions undoubtedly occur concerning the integrity of the text—the accuracy of the translation—the genuine meaning of obscure passages—which questions cannot be resolved by the Scripture alone, independently of any external authority.

Besides all doubts on these important points, the sacred Scripture is still silent on many essential articles. For instance, the baptism of infants is ordained in no text whatever; on the contrary, our Redeemer requires previous instruction, which *apparently* precludes such baptism¹. The observance of the Sunday is in no passage prescribed; the Sabbath, or the seventh day, is indeed proclaimed holy; but the alteration of the day in honour of the great mysteries of the Christian religion, is no where specified. The baptism given by heretics was long a subject of discussion in the church; that sacrament has likewise been administered in various ways, by immersion, by aspersion, by infusion; on all these, and other subjects, doubts may arise which cannot be resolved by the letter of the Sacred writings.

Under these circumstances, we have no resource whatever, but to recur to apostolical tradition, of which the Catholic church alone is the guardian

¹ St. Matt. xxviii. 19; St. Mark, xvi. 15, 16.

and the depositary. Even Protestants themselves, to their utter confusion, and inconsistently with their grand principle, that the Scripture alone is the sole rule of faith, are obliged to recur, in many instances, to the traditions preserved by the Catholic church. However, therefore, they may contend in words, and continue to misrepresent and calumniate, they in fact, and in practice, give up the question. In opposition to the *apparent* will of our Redeemer, they baptize infants; with the Catholic church they keep the Sunday holy, though the precept of the Scripture relates immediately to the Sabbath of the Jews. In the use of the sacrament of baptism, and on many other occasions, they retain the practice of the mother church, from which they departed, and which they incessantly assail with the blackest acts of misrepresentation and calumny!

But the question relating to the absolute necessity of admitting tradition, and of giving the same implicit faith to the unwritten as to the written word, has been long ago decided in such a manner as to preclude all doubt on the subject. St. Paul¹ expressly declares, *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle*. Nothing can be clearer or more precise than this injunction. This distinguished apostle had taught the Thessalonians, and, in fact, every portion of the

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 15.

church with which he was connected, by incessant preaching, and with unbroken assiduity in *oral* instruction; his epistles were decidedly *occasional*, and called for by circumstances as they arose; but to all communications, whether written or oral, he requires the same implicit faith to be given. Hence St. Irenæus, whose martyrdom took place in 202¹, judiciously exclaims, "Should a dispute arise on the slightest question, would it not become a duty to recur to the most ancient churches, where the apostles lived? and if the apostles had left no written Scripture, would it not be a matter of conscientious obligation to *follow the tradition*, which they left to those to whom they confided the care of the churches?" But no father of the church has spoken on the subject with more accuracy and greater decision, than the illustrious St. John Chrysostom, who, in his commentaries on this passage of St. Paul, has the following words, which I wish to be deeply engraven on every mind². After the words before cited, the illustrious doctor says, "Hence it is manifest, that they (the apostles) did not deliver all things by means of epistles, but that they made many communications without writing; and that both are equally entitled to credence: *It is a tradition, ask no farther.*"

¹ Lib. iii. 4.

² St. Chrysos. Hom. iv. on the 2d Epist. Thess. ii. 15, tom. iv. p. 237, edit. Sav. and tom. xi. p. 510, edit. Ben.

If the catechist can produce arguments equally clear from the Scripture and the ancient fathers, to show that the sacred volume, without note or comment, is to be deemed the sole rule of faith, for that is the question between the two churches, let him manfully step forward *without disguise*, and perform this essential service for the Protestant world. "*Et erit mihi magnus Apollo.*"

In addition to the decisive declaration of St. Paul here given, I request the attention of the reader to the following passages : Rom. vi. 17 ; 1 Cor. xi. 2 ; 1 Tim. vi. 20 ; 2 Tim. i. 13. In all these passages, the apostle alludes not to what was written, but to what had been delivered by oral instruction ; and in all these instances he requires acquiescence, docility, and firmness, on the part of his disciples.

As to the observations, that some traditions are false or at least uncertain—that they have not always been admitted—that some are rejected by the Catholic church herself—and that therefore none are to be received—nothing can be more futile than this mode of reasoning. Who does not know, that traditions may regard different subjects, and that they may be more or less valuable, according to their nature, description, and the antiquity they may boast ? In all these cases, who is so proper a judge of what is to be rejected or admitted, as the tribunal established by Christ ? Various customs, forming the com-

mon, or unwritten law of England, may have grown obsolete ; others may be of a trifling nature, and undeserving of serious attention. But this by no means alters the nature of those customs, which are valuable, nor impairs the authority of the supreme power, by which they are retained.

But the grand point that annoys the catechist, in fact, the main hinge on which the whole discussion turns, is, the authority of the Catholic church. "If," says this gentle controvertist, "traditions (not bottomed on the written word) must be received with divine faith, then our faith must be built on the testimony of the church, as divine and infallible, which is absurd." Here let me ask, what is this but to impute absurdity to our Redeemer himself, to arraign his proceedings, and to treat them as marked with weakness and folly ? For before any part of the written word, contained in the New Testament, was published, the pastors of his church, *by his authority*, preached, taught, and diffused, the faith over the Christian world, without the aid of written Scriptures, and by oral instruction only ; and the faithful placed unlimited confidence in the testimony of that church, which, agreeably to the promises of Christ, was to teach *all truth*. St. Paul is an unexceptionable voucher of this fact ; for in the year 58 of the Christian era, when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans,

he testifies¹ that their faith was spoken of over the whole world. It appears then, that the faith of Christ was diffused far and near, before the canon of the new Scriptures had any existence. When at length the Scriptures were written, they consisted, as I have already stated, of occasional compositions, arising from adventitious circumstances, without any visible design of conveying to the faithful in written records any regular system of faith, morality, and discipline. Christians had still to depend on the testimony and the authority of the Catholic church, which is pronounced by St. Paul to be the pillar and foundation of truth². In those days of primitive fervour, the votaries of religion asked not what was written, but what was taught and delivered. The system, therefore, here termed absurd, is precisely that which divine Providence pursued in favouring the world with the inestimable benefit of Christianity.

But let us for a moment suppose the sacred volume to be consigned to individuals of all classes, for the purpose of discovering a regular system of faith, morality, and discipline. Will this desirable consequence ensue? or rather will not the confusion of Babel be a picture of the discordant sentiments of men on every religious subject? Will not the uncontrolled liberty of reading and interpreting the word of God, by

¹ Rom. i. 8.

² Loc. cit.

the unauthorized fancies of each individual, finally lead to horrors of the most alarming nature? to errors of every description? to unrestrained licentiousness in thought and action, to blasphemy, to infidelity? For a satisfactory answer to these questions, I refer the reader to the events, which have marked the progress of Protestantism in every country under the sun; and to transactions which have been daily passing before our eyes. To what cause are we to ascribe the marked diversity of thinking on every point, which distinguished the first reformers? How are we to account for the consequent extravagance of religious sentiments, and the general corruption of morals, which excited horror even in the breast of Luther? To what source are we to trace the unparalleled excesses of the Anabaptists of Germany—the violence of the Calvinists of France—the phrensy of the Presbyterians of Scotland—the ungovernable fury of the Puritans of England, but to the unlimited license of rejecting all religious subordination, and of sanctioning their excesses by their own interpretations of the written word? The countless variety of sects, exhibiting a dark catalogue of the most extravagant opinions, from the era termed the Reformation, to the present melancholy period, when we are doomed to witness the visionary and impious fancies of Joanna Southcott, and the blasphemies of Car-

lile and his associates, can, in the estimation of thinking men, be traced only to this fatal cause.

If the laws of the land, particularly those regarding property, were left to the interpretation of individuals, what would be the inevitable consequence? Judges, and pleaders, and legal advisers of every description, would be rendered unnecessary; each man would be the natural guardian of his own life, property, and honour; the right of the strongest must thus decide every contest: in fact, the whole frame of civil society would be shattered, broken, and completely dissolved by such an arrangement. Now let me ask the catechist a question, which clearly decides the important matter in debate: Has the infinite wisdom of the Son of God, in order to give stability to his church for ever, adopted a system, which would disgrace even human legislation, by making every man the architect of his own faith, the framer of his own code of laws, and an agent altogether independent of any authority established by himself? If human laws are explained by judges, are divine laws to be left to the arbitrary interpretation of individuals? No! impossible! God has not so ordained: the supposition would be a libel on infinite wisdom. Even in the old law¹, the high priest was to be consulted on all difficulties; and from

¹ Deut. xvii. 8, et seq.

his decision there was no appeal. In the new law, the most ample powers of government are conceded to the apostles and their *lawful successors*¹; orders are issued under the severest penalties to hear the Church²; the church is pronounced by St. Paul to be the pillar and foundation of truth³; various offices and stations in this spiritual kingdom of the church are recited by the same apostle⁴; finally, nothing is wanting to the chief pastors to govern that church, which our Redeemer purchased with his blood⁵. All this is surely incompatible with the Protestant system, which leaves every man to guide his own steps, without any dependance on the authority established by Christ. This comment on the answer of the catechist is extended to a great length; but the importance of the matter must form the apology of the writer.

¹ Matt. xxviii. 18, et seq.

² Matt. xviii. 17.

³ Loc. cit.

⁴ Ephes. iv. 11, et seq.

⁵ Acts xx. 28.

QUESTION VI.

Why do you not believe that there are truly and properly
Seven Sacraments of the new law?

ANSWER.

1. The Holy Ghost in Scripture hath no where declared such a number.
2. This precise number of Seven Sacraments was not heard of in the Christian Church, till twelve hundred years after Christ; and therefore is an innovation.
3. The Council of Trent was the first which made this number an article of faith, and in doing so, usurped and attributed to themselves a divine authority.
4. There are only Two Sacraments instituted in the New Testament, i. e. true and proper sacraments, viz. Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord: answering to the two standing sacraments in the old law, Circumcision and the Passover.

OBSERVATIONS.

BEFORE I proceed to reply to the very flimsy statements exhibited in this answer of the catechist, I must presume that he is already convinced by my arguments, that besides the letter of the divine law contained in the Scriptures, he sees the necessity of admitting an unwritten law, and a tribunal competent to preserve, to propound, to maintain, and to enforce what is thus delivered: for let it never be forgotten, that if human laws require the interposition of a judge, divine laws are not to be deprived of this indispensable resource. With this preliminary

observation, which I beg the reader to keep constantly in view, I have to remark on the subject before us, that if the sacred Scripture in no place declares the precise number of the sacraments to be seven, it neither declares the number to be two; this observation therefore cannot forward the cause, which the catechist has espoused. The sacred oracles in no place assign the precise number of the miracles of Christ; nor do they define the number of the articles contained in the creed. The discussion turns not on words found in the sacred Scripture, but on the substance and nature of the object in view; and if we can discover in the sacred writings traces of those seven sacraments, and the existence and use of them in the constant practice of the church, the objections of the catechist must vanish in smoke. Now this can easily be shown from incontestible authorities.

A sacrament is an external sign of invisible grace; which sacred and efficient sign can, in no instance, be used but by the special authority of God: for what man can impiously pretend to attach to any external symbol, which he may use at pleasure, the inestimable blessing of divine grace? Where, therefore, we discover that holy and apostolical men have used any symbols or signs for the purpose of conveying grace to the soul, we immediately and inevitably infer the existence of a sacrament. Let the

catechist apply this observation to each of the sacraments, manifestly referred to in the following passages. Of Baptism it is written : *'Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every living creature. He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved.* Here salvation is promised to the external laver of baptism, accompanied with faith ; consequently grace, on which salvation depends, is necessarily annexed to the sacred rite ; and this assuredly constitutes a true and real sacrament.

Confirmation is established on the same principle : for it is recorded², that the Holy Ghost was conferred by the imposition of the hands of the apostles ; a circumstance which never could have taken place, without the direct authority and the special command of Christ.

The holy Eucharist is clearly specified in the words of the promise³, and in those of the institution, *This is my body ; this is my blood*⁴.

Penance is unquestionably proclaimed in John xx. 23, where Christ bestows a power of remitting sin, and consequently of conferring grace.

The grace annexed to Extreme Unction is no less manifest : for it is expressly declared⁵, that if the sick man, who receives this sacrament,

¹ Mark xvi. 15, 16. ² Acts viii. 17. ³ John vi. 51, et seq.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 26, et seq. ; Mark xiv. 22, et seq. ; Luke xxii. 19, et seq. ⁵ James v. 14, et seq.

shall have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. The circumstances of the ministers of religion being called in, of the solemn unction, accompanied with prayer, and of the *grace conferred by the remission of sin*, place the existence of this sacrament beyond the reach of rational contradiction.

The sacrament of Orders is established by the express declaration of St. Paul¹, where that great apostle ascribes grace to the imposition of hands, by which his disciple was ordained.

The sacrament of Matrimony is referred to by the same apostle², when he calls the union between man and woman a great mystery or sacrament.

When the catechist states, that the precise number of seven sacraments was never heard of in the church, till twelve hundred years after Christ, and that such doctrine is an innovation, he widely departs from the plain matter of fact. For the simplest acquaintance with Christian antiquity would have informed him, that this number was never so notoriously called in question, as to demand the decision of a general council: he might have known from an authority within his reach, that the Greek church at this day admits the number of seven sacraments³;

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

² Ephes. v. 32.

³ See Rites and Ceremonies of the Greek Church, p. 10, by Dr. Glen King. Lond. 1772.

and a little farther research would have taught him, that the doctrine of seven sacraments had been uniformly maintained in that church¹. Now let him use his reasoning powers, and ask himself, how is it possible that this perfect agreement on this particular subject, should have subsisted between churches so long separated from each other, if they had not possessed the same belief, before the celebrated schism in the ninth century? The truth is, these two churches of the East and West were never engaged in any contest relating to the number of the sacraments at any period; and their unvaried and uninterrupted agreement completely overthrows the groundless system of the catechist.

With as little reason does he gratuitously assert, that the council of Trent was the first that declared this number an article of faith, and that this was an usurpation. As I have already stated, the general agreement on the subject had rendered it unnecessary for any general council to propose *a dogmatical decision against an opposite heresy*; but that it had always been *taught in the church*, that this number of the sacraments was to be considered an article of faith, appears from the celebrated decree of union,

¹ See a learned work by Arcudius, *De Concordiâ Ecclesiæ Occidentalis et Orientalis in Septem Sacramentorum Administratione*. Paris. 1672.

addressed to the Armenians, in the council of Florence, in the year 1439. Has the catechist, in the plenitude of his knowledge, never heard of this far-famed document? The story may be briefly told: The nation of the Armenians applied to the general council assembled at Florence for instruction on the various points of faith; and they receive, among other heads of religious information, this doctrine of seven sacraments, as a doctrine which the Western church had always held, and which the Eastern church had never disowned¹.

After this it becomes almost unnecessary to notice the trifling reason alleged by the catechist, for admitting but two sacraments, because Baptism and the Lord's Supper correspond with circumcision and the passover. On this principle, why should not the sacrament of penance be admitted, in order to establish a correspondence with the penance and confession prescribed in the law of Moses²? Why is not order deemed a sacrament, that there be produced a race of ministers corresponding with the priests and Levites, who make so conspicuous a figure in the ancient Testament?

But that the catechist may complain of no want of evidence, to prove the antiquity of seven

¹ See Concil. tom. xiii. p. 1198, et seq. edit. Labbe; Baron. Annal. Eccles. tom. vii. p. 866, et seq. also Carranza, 352, et seq.

² Numb. v. 6, et seq.

sacraments, we here subjoin decisive testimonies from some of the most ancient fathers on the subject. As the catechist admits Baptism and the Lord's Supper to be sacraments, any specific proofs on those points singly might be deemed unnecessary, except they should be mentioned in passages produced to prove the existence of other sacraments. Tertullian, one of the most early of the Latin fathers, has the following words, in which he shortly explains the effects of the three sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the holy eucharist: "The flesh is washed, that the soul may be cleansed from its stains. The flesh is anointed, that the soul may be consecrated. The flesh is sealed, that the soul may be protected. The flesh receives the imposition of hands, that the soul may be illuminated by the Spirit. The flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul may fatten on God¹." A more apposite description, in neat and precise terms, of these three great sacraments, is not to be found in the whole compass of Christian antiquity.

The great St. Cyprian, who suffered for the faith in the year 258, thus neatly and elegantly distinguishes the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. Speaking of these two sacraments,

¹ Tertull. lib. de Resurrec. Carn. c. viii. p. 330, edit. Rigalt. Paris. 1675.

he says in express terms: "Then may Christians be sanctified, and become children of God, when they are born to him by both sacraments¹."

As to the sacrament of penance, by which the sins committed after baptism are forgiven, St. Ambrose, who flourished in the fourth century, speaking of the power of the keys left by Christ in his church, has these remarkable words: "Where is the difference, if priests claim this power thus given (of forgiving sin), whether by penance or by the laver of regeneration? It is the same ministry²." This passage at once supplies authority and reason; for it conveys the belief of that age, that Christ had left in his church this power of forgiving sin, and it fully reconciles to the doctrine, all those who bear the name of Christian, by stating that precisely the same thing is performed in administering baptism.

The great St. Augustine, specifying some of the sacraments, clearly indicates baptism, confirmation, eucharist, and penance³. As to extreme unction, the testimony of the Greek church, from which it is evident that the same faith on the subject in question was common to both churches before the schism, would be alone decisive. But we have a more immediate wit-

¹ St. Cypr. Epist. 72, edit. Fell. p. 305.

² St. Ambrose, lib. 1, de Pœnitent. c. vii.

³ St. Aug. de Baptis. contra Donatist. lib. v. c. 20.

ness in the person of Innocent the First, who commenced his pontificate in 402. He expressly places extreme unction in the number of the sacraments¹. As to the sacrament of order, what plainer proof can the catechist require of its existence, than the language of a general council? Now the general council of Chalcedon, held in 451, expressly condemns those who take money for conferring orders, assigning as a reason of the censure, that they sell the grace of God,—an invincible argument that the grace of God was deemed to be annexed to ordination².

As to matrimony, besides the general agreement of the Latin and Greek churches on the subject, we have the express testimony of St. Augustine, who calls matrimony a real sacrament³.

After these observations, I leave this question to be determined by the catechist himself, whether or not it be more reasonable, in ascertaining the number of the sacraments, to be swayed by the authority and practice of the church of Christ, which he has promised to protect for ever; or to listen to the fancies of individual Protestants, some of whom discover one, some

¹ Innocent I. Epist. ad Decen. No. 8.

² See Con. 2 Conc. Chal. edit. Carranza, p. 135.

³ St. Aug. lib. i. de Nupt. et Concupis. c 10.

two, and some three sacraments in the Bible ; whilst others, with more ingenuity than consistency, find out various sacraments at different times¹.

¹ See Bellarm. Controvers. tom. 3. book ii. c. 23.

QUESTION VII.

Why do not you embrace all that the Council of Trent hath defined about Justification?

ANSWER.

Because the Council of Trent asserts, "that the good works of a justified person do truly merit increase of grace and eternal life," which cannot be true.

1. Because St. Paul tells us, that we are not only justified by grace, Rom. iii. 24, but sanctified by grace, 1 Cor. vi. 11, and glorified by grace, Eph. ii. 8; Luke xii. 32. And if by grace, there can be no such thing as merit.
2. All the good works of a justified person are finite, and how can they merit a glory which is infinite? In merit there must be a proportion between the work and reward.
3. The sufferings of this present life, even the greatest persecutions, are not worthy to be compared with the future glory. These merit not: how then shall other good works merit, which are of less consequence?
4. Whatever is truly meritorious, must have no flaws, no defects, no imperfections mingled with it: but even the best works of justified persons have some defects and imperfections, and therefore cannot merit.
5. Though God promises eternal life to our good works, yet that only declares his great goodness, not what is due in strict justice to our good works; and consequently, his promise doth not make our good works truly meritorious.

OBSERVATIONS.

It appears from the question and answer before us, that the catechist does not disapprove of all that the council of Trent has defined on the

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subject of justification, but of that part only which relates to the merit of good works: and even here his objections arise from a confusion of ideas. For he supposes that, when the council speaks of merit on the part of the just, we are to understand that term in the most rigorous acceptation of the word, and that it implies what is due *in strict justice* to our good works. Had he been more conversant with the language of sound theology, he would have discovered, with intuitive readiness, that the term *merit* is understood in various senses; that in one sense it implies an equality between the work to be performed and the reward to be bestowed, without compromise and without favour. This, in the rigorous acceptation of the term, is properly denominated merit; but it cannot be applied to the finite actions of a mere creature, and is only to be understood of the merit attached to the actions, the labours, the sufferings, the passion and death of our Redeemer, the infinite dignity of whose person gave to all that he achieved for us, this species of merit. Another kind of merit is that which is called by divines, *meritum de condigno*; as also *meritum de congruo*; either of which implies, not a rigid equality between the work that is performed, and the reward which is bestowed, but only that proportion which exists between good works executed with

the aid of divine grace, and directed to a supernatural end, and that degree of glory in heaven which is to requite works thus performed. This is the kind of merit, which the council ascribes to the good works of the just ; and of the reality and existence of this description of merit, the most ample testimonies may be produced from the sacred writings. In fact, is not our Redeemer perpetually urging us to the performance of good works, by the alluring prospect of a glorious reward ? and how is a reward to be obtained but by meritorious conduct ? Does he not encourage us to bear persecution with joy, because *our reward is great in heaven*¹ ? Does he not declare in terms not to be mistaken², that he shall come in the glory of his Father, *and render to every man according to his works* ?

The language of St. Paul is in perfect unison with that of our Redeemer. In this Epistle to the Romans³, he charges the sinner with the guilt and folly of *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every one according to his works*. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians⁴, he asserts, that if any man's work shall pass the fiery ordeal, *he shall receive a reward*. Nothing can be clearer or more precise than his language in another place⁵ ; *what-*

¹ Matt. v. 12.² Ibid. xvi. 27.³ C. ii. 5, 6.⁴ C. iii. 14.⁵ Gal. vi. 7.

soever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Innumerable are the passages of a similar import, which might be produced from the sacred volume, to confirm this doctrine, that eternal life is to be given as a reward, which consequently pre-supposes merit on the part of the just. One passage more, possessing peculiar weight, ought not to be omitted by a divine who undertakes to discuss this important subject. It is found in the close of the Second Epistle to Timothy¹, where the illustrious apostle, after recounting with dignity the general character of his labours, thus energetically and feelingly exclaims : *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.* What can more demonstratively prove the position, that the just merit by their good works, in the sense before explained, than this decisive declaration of St. Paul, who represents God as a just judge, apportioning a crown to each, according to the nature and quality of his works ?

But, says the catechist, according to St. Paul, we are justified by grace, sanctified by grace, and glorified by grace : where therefore is there any room for merit ? We are unquestionably

¹ C. iv. 8.

indebted to the divine bounty and to the merciful and abundant redemption of Christ for every blessing of grace, sanctity, and glory ; and if we claim any species of merit, it is not by ascribing such merit to the efforts of nature, but to the assistance and influence of divine grace, and by making such a use of the gratuitous favours of God, as to ensure the promised crown. These favours are therefore gratuitous, because they are the pure effects of the divine bounty ; but the actions of the just become meritorious, because by the help of divine grace, they so co-operate with the merciful dispensations of God, as to obtain the reward, which the just judge appor-tions to each man's deeds. Hence St. Augustine observes, in a well-known passage, *that God, in crowning the merit of his servants, crowns but his own gifts*¹.

If, after this explanation, the catechist is at a loss to discover the proportion between the finite actions of a justified person, and the reward which is infinite, it must be said, that the proportion lies, not between the finite and unsupported efforts of the creature and immortal glory, but between the grace of God on one side, to which, when properly used by the creature, an eternal reward is promised, and that final consummation of all our desires on the other.

¹ St. Aug. Enarr. in Psalm xcviij.

When the catechist, in allusion to what St. Paul writes¹, that the sufferings of the present life are not to be compared to future glory, infers that therefore we cannot merit by such sufferings, he evidently mistakes the meaning of the apostle. All that can be collected from this passage is, that there is no comparison to be instituted between what is temporal and what is eternal ; that our present sufferings are light and momentary, but that future glory, both in substance and duration, exceeds what we here undergo. All this is undoubtedly true ; but it by no means affords the shadow of a proof, that God will not give to his elect a crown, which is to be merited by works, performed by the influence of his grace.

With as little reason can it be asserted, that the flaws and imperfections found in human actions, destroy all kind of merit. It is perfectly true, that nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of heaven, and that before our final doom can be fixed in the enjoyment of eternal happiness, all our stains must be washed away. But it by no means follows, that faults inseparable from human nature preclude all merit ; for in that case, the promises of a crown, of a reward, of an adequate retribution for good works, so frequently made to us in the sacred writings, would

¹ Rom. viii. 18.

be altogether without meaning. It must therefore be said, with St. Augustine¹, that while God crowns the merits of the saints with eternal glory, he shews them mercy, by forgiving them those flaws and blots, which accompany their works.

After this, will it be alleged by the catechist, with any appearance of reason, that the promises of God will prove his goodness only, but not our merits? We speak not of merit in the rigorous sense, as has been before observed; but from what has been said, it will clearly appear, that the promises of God will prove his goodness—his rewards will prove him to be a just judge, to use St. Paul's expression—and his mercy will appear in remitting all minor imperfections and defects.

It would be no difficult task to accumulate innumerable passages from the holy fathers, in confirmation of the doctrine, which relates to the merit of good works, explained in the Catholic sense. Let the authority of the immortal St. Augustine alone suffice. He says, in words not to be misconstrued², “ Let us, who have purposed to gain eternal life, love God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind. *For eternal life is altogether a reward*, the pro-

¹ Lib. de Correptione et Gratia, c. 13.

² Lib. de Moribus Eccles. Cath. c. 25.

mise of which excites joy : *nor can reward precede merit*, or be given to man, *before he has deserved it.*" These words require no comment : let the catechist turn and torture them in any shape, they will be found always to convey the Catholic doctrine on this most momentous subject.

QUESTION VIII.

Why do not you admit of the sacrifice of the Mass ?

ANSWER.

1. Because if it be a true, propitiatory sacrifice, and they offer it daily, Christ must be killed every day, which is directly contrary to Heb. ix. 25, 26, 27, 28. And it sounds dreadful to a Christian ear, that the priest kills Christ every day.
2. Though the Lord's supper was called a sacrifice in the ancient church, yet they meant no more by it, than that, as it takes in the whole actions, it is only a commemoration or representation of Christ's sacrifice, and a sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, but no proper or true propitiatory sacrifice.
3. The words " Do this in remembrance of me," from which they prove the institution of such a sacrifice, import just the contrary.
4. They make the sacrifice of the mass available to the dead, and to souls in purgatory, whereof there is not one word in all the New Testament.
5. The sacrifice of the mass is a great dishonour to our blessed Lord, in the design, practices, and pretences of it, for it makes his sacrifice imperfect.
6. They celebrate masses to the honour of the saints ; which is to offer sacrifice to their honour, and therefore unlawful ; because sacrifice ought to be offered to the honour of none but God.

OBSERVATIONS.

ON the subject of the sacrifice of the mass, the catechist has exhibited some of those splendid instances of misrepresentation and ignorance, by

which the writings of his friends are too frequently distinguished. Setting aside the authority of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, which he *professes in words* to admit, while *in fact* he rejects her jurisdiction, he employs his own individual reason, to explain away from the written word, a true and real sacrifice, which at every period of Christianity has proved the ornament and glory of religion. To ascertain the reality of this sacrifice, let him turn to his Bible¹, and he will find the Almighty rejecting all the sacrifices of the law of Moses, and promising, in the law of grace, a new sacrifice—a clean oblation—which was to be substituted as a part of the public service, in the temples of the most High. This great sacrifice was to render the name of God great and venerable among the Gentiles, and to prove an acceptable offering, not proceeding from the liberality of man, but from the copious fountain of divine goodness. This offering was to be continually made in every nation under the sun, and clearly to form an open, public, and authorized act of religion.

If the catechist should say, with Calvin and Chemnitz², that we are to understand this sacrifice, not in the real and absolute meaning of the term, but only of a spiritual sacrifice, let me again exhort him to use his reasoning powers to

¹ Malach. i. 10, 11.

² Institut. lib. iv. c. 18. No. 4, et 2 parte Exam. p. 760.

some effect, and to observe, that the oblation here spoken of by the prophet, is opposed to all the sacrifices of the ancient law, and that by an inevitable consequence, the comparison requires that we should understand the sacrifice here mentioned in the strictest meaning of the term. The Hebrew word *minha*, or, if you read it according to the Parkhurstian method, *menehé*, here employed, is the strongest confirmation of this sense. For this word is used in other parts of the Scripture, to express the ancient sacrifices properly so called; but when the spiritual sacrifice of prayer and good works is mentioned, there occurs invariably an additional word, which either expressly or by implication conveys the intended meaning. Besides, how can this clean oblation, which was to be introduced in opposition to the sacrifices of the law, be understood of the performance of good works, when this latter kind of sacrifice, figuratively so called, had been already enforced in the strongest terms both by the law and the prophets? Had not the Mosaic dispensation already required a love of God, which was to regulate every faculty of the soul, and to control every action of the creature? Had not the prophets continually enforced the necessity of good works, in the strongest and most energetic language? Is there a single virtue or perfection, which can adorn the soul of a Christian, to the attainment of which, the most

earnest exhortations may not be found in the immortal strains of David, or in the venerable remains of the other prophets? How therefore can we, by any possibility, understand the promised oblation of the new law, as referring to good works, when such works of every description had been before so powerfully recommended? Let the catechist weigh this matter impartially and deliberately, and he will find, that the Catholic interpretation of this passage is the only one that can be supported.

If this argument is thus triumphantly decisive, in favour of the unbloody and pure sacrifice of the New Testament, not less so is that which is drawn from the priesthood of Christ. He is said¹ to be a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec; and St. Paul² not only applies these words to our Redeemer, but shews the superiority of the Christian priesthood over that of Aaron from this circumstance, because Melchisedec was superior to Abraham, and to those who descended from Abraham. Now let me ask the catechist, what possible connexion can we discover between the order and functions of Christ as a priest for ever, and those of Melchisedec, if we exclude from our consideration that office which peculiarly belongs to the priest, the offering of sacrifice³? and if the affinity between

¹ Psalm cix. 5, al. cx. 4.

² Heb. vii.

³ Ib. viii. 3.

the two priesthoods is to be looked for in their respective sacrifices, where shall we discover it but in the bread and wine offered by the first, and the holy sacrifice instituted at the last supper, under the form and appearance of the same elements? It is recorded of Melchisedec¹, that he offered bread and wine in his capacity of priest of the most high God—that he gave his blessing to Abraham—and that he received tithes from him. He evidently officiated in his capacity of priest, as all these circumstances fully demonstrate; and those who assert, that he barely appeared to give refreshment to Abraham and his men, after the performance of a severe service, unnecessarily and wantonly degrade the character of the priest. For at the time that Abraham was laden with spoils of every description², these persons convert into a menial service, the only action recorded in Scripture of him, who was ordained to be the type and figure of the high-priest of the new law.

After considering this most splendid promise of Almighty God recorded by the prophet Malachi, and this most decisive comparison between our Redeemer and Melchisedec, let the catechist turn his serious and impartial attention to the actions of our divine Lord at the last supper, as related by the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark,

¹ Gen. xiv. 18, et seq.

² Gen. loc. cit.

and Luke¹, he will there find clearly expressed a distinct mention of the most sacred and noble victim ever presented to the Deity. The sacred body of Christ is there said to be given for us; his blood is *shed* for the remission of sins; and St. Paul, who surely must be presumed to have the spirit, and to understand the meaning of Christ, expressly declares, that in these holy mysteries, the body of Christ is *broken* for us². Again, the same great apostle³, speaking on the same subject, declares the holy mysteries under consideration, to be a participation of the body of Christ, and the communion of the blood of Christ; and in terms not to be misunderstood, he institutes a clear comparison between the sacrifice offered to the living God, and the impious sacrifices immolated to devils. Now how can the body of Christ be said to be *given for us*; how can his sacred blood be *shed for us*, unless we understand this most sacred and solemn action, as a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice? With what consistency either of thought or of language, can St. Paul introduce a comparison, in the passages referred to, between the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, and the table of the Lord and the table of devils; that is, between the sacrifices offered to one and to the

¹ Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 24; Luke xxii. 19.

² 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

³ Ibid. x. 16, et 20, 21.

other, unless these divine mysteries were designedly to be considered as a true, real, and proper sacrifice? Again, let me request the attention of the catechist to this most important, urgent, and irrefragable argument.

If a doubt were to exist, whether any particular practice formed a part of the law of this land, a specific declaration of the legislature would unquestionably be deemed decisive, as to the nature of the contested point. In vain would individuals be permitted to allege, that they have before them the statute or written law; and that all things necessary for the welfare of society, and connected with the fundamental principles of the British constitution, are expressed so clearly as to admit of no doubt. The obvious reply would be, that such a plea would not only supersede the necessity of judges, counsellors, pleaders, and attorneys, but would subvert the authority of the governing powers, by which laws are made and explained. And is not this sensible and appropriate reply equally admissible in the concerns of religion, as well as in those of a temporal nature? Is the authority left by Christ in his church, of a less sacred nature than that power, by which kings govern and judges expound laws? I must therefore be allowed to assume an inevitable inference, that when this church, which Christ has promised to protect for ever, has pronounced that a true, proper, and

propitiatory sacrifice is left by our Redeemer in the holy mass, it becomes indispensably necessary for all members of his church to admit such a truth, as well as every other proposed by the same authority.

That no doubt whatever exists as to the nature of the doctrine of the church of Christ on this subject, is well known. Let the catechist and his friends examine the doctrine as proposed by the council of Trent on this great sacrifice¹, and from this period let them ascend through every age to the apostolic times, and they will find at every step traces of this distinguished tenet. The testimony of St. Paul is clear, from the passages already produced. St. Clement, a man endowed with an apostolic spirit, and a contemporary of the apostle's, in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of the oblation, which it is the peculiar province of the Christian priesthood to make, evidently alluding to the great eucharistic sacrifice². The doctrine taught by St. Ignatius the martyr, who was bishop of Antioch, and suffered for the faith in the year 107, is equally conclusive on the subject³. The same doctrine may be collected from various parts of the writings of St. Justin, the ornament of the second age, but particularly from his learned and ingenious Dia-

¹ Sess. 22.

² See St. Clem. 1 Epist. ad Cor. c. 44, cum notâ doctiss. editoris Russel. Lond. 1746.

³ See Epist. ad Smyrn. tom. ii. p. 49, c. 7, edit. Russel, cum notâ Edit.

logue with Tryphon the Jew¹. The celebrated passage also, in his Great Apology, which has always excited so much attention in the learned world, may be produced as a decisive testimony in favour of the Catholic doctrine².

In the most ancient of all liturgies, inserted in the Apostolic Constitutions³, the body and blood of Christ is said in express terms to be offered to God by his order for the various purposes of sacrifice there enumerated. St. Irenæus may be produced as an uncontradicted witness of the doctrine of the third age, who declares⁴ that our Redeemer at his last supper introduced a new sacrifice of the new testament, which the church receives from the apostles, and offers to God throughout the whole world.

Indeed the testimonies on the subject from the ancient fathers would be sufficient to fill volumes, and would assuredly swell this treatise to an immeasurable length. But, in fact, all this labour is abridged by the acknowledgments of our adversaries. "*Habemus confitentes reos.*" The centuriators of Magdeburgh—whose zeal and acuteness displayed in the Protestant cause, are well known—have been constrained reluctantly to own, that the existence of this sacrifice of the new law stands recorded in the early

¹ See Dial. cum Tryphon, p. 339. tom. iii. edit. Jebb.

² See Apol. c. 87, p. 131, tom. i. edit. Grabe.

³ Lib. viii. c. 12.

⁴ Lib. iv. c. 32, et seq.

monuments of Christianity ; and on the passage of St. Irenæus just referred to, they express their acknowledgment in terms of indignation¹. They also betray a considerable share of asperity at the expence of St. Cyprian, for affirming that the priest officiates in the person of Christ, and that a real sacrifice is offered to God². If in addition to the testimonies both of friends and foes, the catechist will deign slightly to inspect the various ancient liturgies now extant, particularly those of St. James, of St. Clement, of St. John Chrysostom, of St. Basil, and that explained by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his celebrated Catechetical Discourses now extant, he will discover such a mass of evidence in favour of the Catholic doctrine relative to the eucharistic sacrifice, as even his bigotry and ignorance will not resist.

But as he is fond of making an occasional display of learning, by referring to the belief of the Greek church, let me inform him, that the Calvinists of France, in the reign of Louis XIV. adopted the same plan, and laboured to persuade the Christian world, that the Greek schismatics favoured their innovations in every point. In consequence of this assertion so often and so solemnly repeated, his Christian Majesty directed his ambassador at Constantinople, to collect official documents, containing the precise belief

¹ Cent. ii. c. 4.

² Ibid. iii. c. 4.

of the Greek church on all articles at that time under discussion between the Catholics and the Calvinists. This commission was executed on the most extensive scale ; and information of the most interesting nature was obtained from every city, town, village, and hamlet, which had the advantage of a pastor. The result was a strong and uniform expression of displeasure and indignation on the part of the Greeks, at the impudence of the Calvinists in imputing to them errors, which they had incessantly viewed with horror and alarm. In no single instance, as appears from the documents, which they give in the most authentic form, do they favour the doctrines of the pretended reformers. On the subject of the sacrifice of the mass, I here copy that part of the declaration which relates to this subject, and which is contained in the first attestation signed by seven archbishops of the east. These venerable and right reverend personages express their belief, "that the eucharist is a sacrifice for the living and the dead, ordained by Jesus Christ, and which the apostles have left by tradition¹." With this attestation the other very numerous documents are in perfect unison².

I now request, once for all, that the catechist and his friends, who profess such ardent zeal in

¹ See these most important and satisfactory documents in the learned work, entitled, *Perpetuité de la Foi*, tom. iii. liv. 8, p. 406, et seq. edit. Paris, 1704.

² See Note A, at the end of the volume.

promoting Christian knowledge, will be no longer guilty of the anti-christian practice of insulting the learned world with false statements relative to the belief of Catholic tenets, which are proved to be admitted by those who have been so long separated from the Catholic church. It is to be presumed, that they will not consider that doctrine as a novelty, which is supported by such a weight of evidence, and that they will give the fathers of the council of Trent full credit for not introducing idolatry, when they defined, that in the mass, there is offered to God a true and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead¹.

I: After this plain and succinct statement, it becomes almost unnecessary to reply to the trivial objections of the catechist. The first remark, that the Catholic doctrine would establish a fact, that Christ must be killed every day, is a stupid misconception of what the council of Trent has made so clear. That venerable assembly declares², agreeably to the suggestion of St. Paul³, that our Redeemer was offered but once on the altar of the cross for our redemption ; but as his priesthood was not extinguished by his death, that he left a visible sacrifice as a perpetual memorial of the great sacrifice on the cross, and as a means of applying its transcendent virtue for the remission of sins. For this purpose he offered, under the

¹ Sess. 22.

² Ibid. c. 1.

³ Heb. ix. 25. et seq. ; et x. 12.

appearances of bread and wine, his own most sacred body and blood, and commissioned his apostles, whom he ordained priests, and their successors in the ministry, to do the same. *Do this in remembrance of me.* The sacrifice therefore as to the *mode* and *end* is unbloody, representative, and commemorative: as to the *substance*, *the victim is the same*, presented to the eternal Father in an unbloody manner; for Christ *dieth no more*¹.

II. The next observation, that the ancient church understood the sacrifice of the new law to consist in nothing but prayer and thanksgiving, has been obviated in the fullest manner in our preceding strictures.

III. If the catechist should persist in saying, that the words, *do this in remembrance of me*, import a contrary doctrine to the Catholic, it must be urged in reply, without the possibility of rational contradiction, that they import a precept of doing what Christ did; that he has been proved to have offered a real sacrifice, and that the *end* and *mode* of commemorating his death and passion, by no means destroy the reality of such sacrifice.

IV. But our adversary is displeased that the mass is made available to the faithful departed, and that not a word to this effect can be found in the New Testament. Let him hear a short

¹ Rom. vi. 9.

and satisfactory answer. Our Redeemer at his last supper expressly, and without any limitation and reserve, declared¹, that the sacred oblation was offered for the remission of sins; and St. Augustine justly infers from his words², that some sins are forgiven in the next world. It will therefore follow by an inevitable consequence, that what is offered to God for the remission of sin in general, will benefit the faithful departed, as well as the living. Another consequence is equally clear, that the catechist has not read the New Testament with much discrimination, or he would not have contested the propriety of a practice, which is grounded on the words of our Redeemer, and which St. Augustine, in his well-known treatise on the Care of the Dead, mentions with approbation³.

V. & VI. If the catechist in his prudence had condescended to inspect the council of Trent⁴, he would have forborne the trifling, and to a man of learning, the two disgraceful objections which close this article. He says that the sacrifice of the mass is a great dishonour to our Lord, as it makes his sacrifice imperfect; and he also asserts, that the Catholic church offers sacrifice to the saints, and thus gives to them an honour due only to God. I am really ashamed to copy such instances either of gross ignorance or of

¹ Matt. xxvi. 28.

² Ibid. xii. 32.

³ See St. Aug. de Cûrâ pro Mortuis, c. 1. ⁴ Sess. 22. c. 1, 2, et 3.

wilful misrepresentation, as disgrace the pages of a writer, belonging to a learned nation, and living at an enlightened period. Go, catechist, and learn from the chapters referred to from the Council of Trent, that the sacrifice of the mass originates not in any supposed imperfection of the great sacrifice of the cross; that it is the same sacrifice offered in an unbloody manner; that the action is performed in consequence of the injunction of our Redeemer himself; that the grand purposes in presenting this victim are to commemorate the bloody sacrifice of Christ, and to apply its transcendent fruits to our souls. Learn also, that though the mass is sometimes offered in honour of the saints, and in commemoration of their triumphs, it is never offered *to* them, but *to God alone*, from whose grace those triumphs were derived. Hence the priest says not, "I offer this sacrifice to thee, Peter or Paul;" but he presents the victim *to God alone*; and while he returns thanks for the favours bestowed on the saints, he implores their patronage, that they, whose actions are recorded on earth, would interpose in favour of poor mortals before the throne of grace. Let the catechist read the whole of the last chapter of the eighth book of St. Augustine's great work *on the City of God*, and he will find this very point clearly elucidated; he will also discover undoubted evidence of the reality of this great sacrifice, as universally

admitted in the days of St. Augustine. "We do not erect temples, and offer sacrifices to the martyrs," says this eminent doctor; "but we honour their memories as those of holy men, who have combated for the truth. Who ever heard a priest at the altar exclaim in the liturgy, 'I offer to thee this sacrifice, Peter, Paul, or Cyprian,' while, however, an offering is made in their remembrance to God, who made them both men and martyrs, and associated them in celestial honour with his holy angels¹?" Let the catechist pay a due attention to this and similar monuments of ecclesiastical antiquity, and he will himself become ashamed of his own ignorance and consequent misrepresentation.

¹ St. Aug. de Civitate Dei, l. viii. c. 27.

QUESTION IX.

Why do you not believe a transubstantiation in the Lord's Supper?

ANSWER.

1. Our very senses contradict such a conversion of the bread into the natural body of Christ: for we may see and feel, and taste and smell, that the bread and wine after consecration, are bread and wine still; and if we must deny our senses, we shake the foundations of the Christian religion.
2. It is against reason that Christ's body and blood should be in a thousand places at once, as it must be, if in every place where consecration of the elements is used, such a conversion be made.
3. It is against Scripture, for the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28, calls it bread after consecration.
4. It is against the nature of a sacrament, which is an outward visible sign of something spiritual, and transubstantiation destroys the sign, and consequently the sacrament.
5. The words of Christ, *this is my body*, from which they infer transubstantiation, do not naturally infer such a change, by the confession of several learned Papists themselves.
6. If there be such a transubstantiation, Christ's body must not be at such times in heaven, contrary to the article of our faith, which imports, that Christ is to continue in heaven till the restitution of all things.
7. They themselves cannot be sure of such a change, because they make it dependent upon the intention of the priest.
8. The absurdities that flow from this doctrine are great and many; for it would follow that Christ, who administered this sacrament, did eat up himself; that the disciples did eat up their master; that Christ's body may be locked up in a box for half a year together, and longer, &c.

9. Transubstantiation is against the doctrine of the Primitive Church, which calls the bread the figure of Christ's body.
10. This doctrine is a mere novelty, for it was but a disputable point, even in the Church of Rome, in the ninth and tenth centuries; and made no article of faith till twelve hundred years after Christ, and better, in the council of Lateran.
11. The doctrine of the Church of England, that the bread represents, and is a memorial of Christ's body crucified upon the cross, and upon that account is his body, is true; and therefore that of transubstantiation must be false. And that our doctrine is true is evident from hence,
 1. It is agreeable to the nature of a sacrament.
 2. Agreeable to Christ's explication, when he speaks of his body; *do this in remembrance of me.*
 3. Agreeable to the doctrine of the Primitive Church for the first eight hundred years after Christ, as some of the Papists themselves confess.
 4. Agreeable to the expressions used in the passover, to which this sacrament answers. For when at the eating of the paschal lamb, they said, *this is the passover*; every body knew the meaning was, *it is the memorial of it.*
 5. There is no inconvenience in our doctrine, whereas in transubstantiation there are abundance of absurdities, as hath been said already.

OBSERVATIONS.

CONNECTED with this distinguished tenet, is the matter contained in the answer to the ninth question. Here I must implore the attention of the catechist, and of every reader of these pages, to the remarks on this point; for I have no doubt that, by the blessing of God, I shall be enabled to establish the Catholic doctrine by the strongest and most unexceptionable evidence, as

also triumphantly to refute the objections, which this Protestant answer supplies.

The Catholic doctrine on this important article is, *that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood; which conversion the Catholic church calls Transubstantiation.* The doctrine of Luther on the subject was, that our Redeemer is really present in the sacrament in conjunction with the elements, a system which he called *Consubstantiation*. Zuinglius held a presence in figure only; Calvin, after many various explanations, finally determined the point by saying, that we eat by *faith only*; "*non aliam esse quam fidei manducationem fateamur; ut nulla alia fingi potest*¹." The same opinion, as far as we can form a correct judgment, amidst the various and conflicting interpretations of its doctors, seems to be held by the Church of England.

Of the truth of the Catholic doctrine, every species of testimony can be produced from the Holy Scriptures; from the unanimous consent of the fathers and other ecclesiastical writers, dur-

¹ Instit. lib. iv. cap. 17, No. 5.

ing every period of Christianity to the present day ; from the attested consent of the Greek and Latin churches ; and from every theological monument which can be rationally demanded.

In considering the scriptural proofs of this most important dogma, we find in the sixth chapter of St. John, a clear promise made by our Redeemer to give to the faithful his body and blood. He had performed the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, which was to serve as a pledge and figure of the multiplication of his sacred body, under a sacramental form : he then proceeded, by a gradual process, to excite the faith of his hearers in himself, as the promised Messiah ; and from this introduction, he clearly gave a distinct assurance, that he would bestow his flesh for the life of the world¹. That the words of Christ, in this place, are to be understood in the plain and literal sense, every circumstance tends demonstratively to prove. The clear distinction which he makes between eating his body and drinking his blood, points to a real, external, and visible action, by which Christ was to be received, and cannot, in the manner in which it is introduced, be confined to a spiritual union by faith. This is so manifest, that it did not escape the attention of the Jews, to whom the discourse was addressed. *They therefore*

¹ St. John, vi. 51, et seq.

*strove among themselves, saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat*¹? This apprehension of the hearers, our Redeemer as a guide, as a friend, as a physician, as a teacher, would assuredly have removed, had it been erroneous. For a false impression on the subject would have led to those consequences, with which, even at this period of time, Protestants reproach the Catholic church. But does our Redeemer remove this clear and decided impression of the Jews? No! he does not; he on the contrary confirms it in the most decided tone, and in language, which, under all the circumstances of the case, cannot admit of another meaning; he threatens, with the heaviest denunciations of vengeance, those who shall refuse to partake of his body and blood²; he strengthens his meaning by a variety of repetitions, for the obvious purpose of imprinting it more deeply on the minds of his hearers; he allures them to the promised banquet by the fairest and most splendid assurances of receiving life, grace, and immortality³; he absolutely excludes all supposed figure in eating and drinking, by the force of the terms which he employs; *my flesh is meat INDEED; and my blood is drink INDEED*⁴; he declares the eating of his body to be as real as his union with the heavenly Father, and his divine

¹ St. John, vi. 52.² Ibid. 53.³ Ibid.⁴ Ibid. 55.

mission from the Father¹. Now the union of Christ with his heavenly Father is not imaginary, his mission is not figurative. These assurances, therefore, of eternal wisdom—these solemn asseverations made at the moment, when the Jews clearly apprehended his meaning—these repeated and direct confirmations of that meaning, when a mistake might with so much facility be corrected—the comparisons here introduced, all tending to produce the same conviction, unquestionably demonstrate the intention of our Redeemer to give us his body and blood under the sacramental forms.

Other accompanying circumstances no less clearly lead the mind to the same conviction. Many of the disciples, on hearing the same doctrine, declared it to be a *hard saying*, and asked, *who can hear it?* and *from that time went back, and walked no more with him*². Those persons were therefore shocked and filled with horror at a proposition so new, so unprecedented, and so apparently revolting to human nature. Now in the supposition that our Redeemer had designed to bestow a *spiritual banquet only*, to the utter exclusion of his sacred presence,—what could have excited such horror, as to occasion the departure of these disciples? Positively nothing. Their conduct, therefore, coupled with the ac-

¹ St. John, v. 57.

² Ibid. 60.

³ Ibid. 66.

companying observation of our Redeemer, places the matter beyond the reach of controversy. For let the reader attend to this most important declaration : *When Jesus knew that his disciples murmured at it, he said to them, doth this offend you? What and if you shall see the Son of man ascend where he was before?* Here our divine Saviour evidently refers to the institution of a mystery, which was to appear unprecedented, and to excite a greater share of astonishment after his ascension than before that event ; and can this be the figurative supper of the Protestant, which presents nothing hard to human nature, nothing impervious to human reason ? Is it not directly and unquestionably the Catholic doctrine which Christ here establishes, and which was to exhibit increased difficulties after his ascension, when his sacred body was to be in a glorified state in heaven, whilst it was to be in a sacramental state on millions of altars on earth. It appears then that the objections of the Protestant, and those of the Jew and the Capharnaite to the words of our Redeemer, are precisely the same ; but that the belief of the Catholic is conformable to the declaration of the apostles, who admitted a doctrine, however elevated above sense and reason, because it was proposed by him who had the words of eternal life¹.

¹ St. John, vi. 68.

I am fully aware that it is objected by Protestants, that all the extraordinary assurances of Christ, contained in this chapter, are softened down and explained away by these words¹, *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak are spirit and truth.* But this part of the address of our Redeemer is in perfect unison with his preceding declarations; for according to the known idiom of the sacred oracles, by the flesh we are frequently to understand a gross and carnal apprehension of things; by the spirit, a more refined and spiritual meaning. The Capharnaïtes supposed, in their gross acceptance of the doctrine, that the body of Christ was to be divided and distributed to his followers like meat in the market; our Redeemer corrects this erroneous impression, and points to a spiritual and sacramental state of existence, in which surely he could place his sacred body, as well as the bodies of his elect, at the general resurrection. When St. Paul says of each of the bodies of the saints, *It is sown a natural body—it is raised a spiritual body*²; does the Protestant suppose that these bodies will cease to exist because they will become spiritualized? and are the words of our Redeemer, importing a real presence in the holy sacrament, to be questioned, because he is there

¹ St. John, v. 63.

² 1 Cor. xv. 44.

in a spiritual and sacramental form? If he can impart to our natural bodies spiritual qualities, what prevents him from adorning his own with similar endowments, and presenting it to us in the manner which here he so clearly promises? Hence the illustrious and eloquent St. John Chrysostom, writing on this very passage, has these memorable words: "When Christ spoke these words, *the flesh profiteth nothing*, he said them, not of his flesh—far, very far, otherwise; but he alluded to those who conceived what he delivered *in a carnal sense*. What is it to apprehend a thing in a carnal manner? To look at the object before you, and to carry your view no farther. This is the method of viewing things *carnally*. But it is our duty not to confine our view to the external appearance of things, but to see with the eyes of our souls all the mysteries there contained. This is the method of viewing things *spiritually*. He that eateth not his flesh, and drinketh not his blood, hath not life in him; how, therefore, doth the flesh profit nothing, without which it is impossible to possess life? You see that the words, *the flesh profiteth nothing*, were not spoken of his flesh, but only of a carnal apprehension of his words¹."

The process of this inquiry leads me to the ever memorable words of the institution of this

¹ St. Chrysos. Hom. in Jean. ad. cap. vi. Hom. xlvii. p. 750, tom. ii. edit. Savil.

adorable sacrament¹. It must be acknowledged by every candid inquirer, that if ever the plain and literal meaning of Scriptural expressions is to be adopted, it must be resorted to in the present instance. We have just seen that our Redeemer had made to his disciples, in the presence of the Jews, a clear and decided promise of giving his body and blood; and on this occasion only we find that he carried it into effect, and completely redeemed the pledge which he had given. For at his last supper, as it is recorded by those three evangelists, our Saviour took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, *This is my body*. He also took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying, *This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for the remission of sins*. Unless we understand these words in their plain and obvious meaning, it must be said, that we have not a single passage left in the gospels to prove that our Redeemer fulfilled a promise, so solemnly and so deliberately given, as that contained in the sixth chapter of St. John. We must be, moreover, constrained to give up a principle, adopted with much ostentation by Protestants, that the literal sense is ever to be preferred in interpreting the sacred Scriptures, except it be *clearly* destroyed by other passages, of which

¹ Matt. xxvi. 26, et seq.; Mark xiv. 22, et seq.; Luke xxii. 19, et seq.

the meaning cannot raise a doubt. Nothing of this nature can be alleged in the present instance, as will fully appear in the course of these observations.

That it may be indubitably evinced, that nothing but the literal sense of the words under consideration was designed by our Redeemer, the reader is requested to investigate minutely the nature of the action which he was performing. It is agreed by all parties, that he was instituting a sacrament. Neither Luther, nor Melancthon, nor Calvin, nor Zuinglius, nor any one of the inglorious tribe of the reforming doctors, ever ventured to call this in question. Now let me ask, in a tone of decision, was it consistent with the wisdom of the Son of God, in the institution of the most exalted, the most dignified sacrament of the new law, to employ such figurative modes of speech as would involve the Christian world in endless disputes and palpable contradictions? Is such a supposition decent and respectful? is it in any manner consistent with the reverence which we owe to our divine teacher, our guide, our redeemer? If we examine the institution of circumcision in the old law¹, of the sacrifice of the paschal lamb², and of every ritual observance of whatever kind³,—we shall find every article explained and

¹ Gen. xvii. 10, et seq.

² Exod. xii. 3, et seq.

³ Levit. passim

enforced in the clearest manner possible, without disguise, without trope or figure ; without the use of any term that can occasion the smallest doubt or perplexity. In the new law, baptism is enforced in expressions equally clear and precise¹; and whenever our Redeemer, in his public addresses, employed any idea or term of an obscure nature, he was always careful to explain it privately to his disciples. And are we to suppose, that after these precautions, taken in the old law on similar occasions, our Redeemer, in opposition to his usual practice, would select the period of his last interview with his beloved friends, to institute the greatest of all sacraments, in terms dark, perplexing, and unintelligible? No! impossible! this cannot be for one moment admitted. Let the whole host of reformers view the matter in this light, deliberately and impartially, and I can have no doubt that they will deem the literal sense the only one admissible.

Not only was our Redeemer employed on this occasion in the institution of a sacrament, but he was engaged in making his last will and testament. "This is my blood of the new testament." And can we suppose that on an occasion so solemn, at a time so precious and endearing, he would bequeath a valuable legacy in terms which would puzzle and perplex his friends? The old

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Mark, xvi. 16.

testament is established in forms of speech which admit no doubt¹; the wills of Jacob and David are couched in plain expressions²; prudent men never fail to express their intentions, in their last solemn deeds, in such language as will prevent litigation; all human laws require, that the words conveying the will of a testator, should be understood in the plain and obvious meaning. If, on this principle, in the devise of real property, a legacy were left in this manner: "I leave such a house and such a field to my valued friend," and a near relation were to contend, that these expressions indicated only a picture, sign, or figure of the house and field, such a plea would be treated, in a court of justice, with scorn and indignation. And can a man, calling himself a Christian, affirm, with his hand on his heart, that the Redeemer of the world has neglected precautions which were taken in the old law? that the eternal Son of God has less wisdom than is possessed by mere mortals? or that, while all testaments among mankind are to be interpreted in the obvious and literal sense of the words, *his last will only* is to be tortured by forced explanations, and left in doubt and uncertainty? Such a sentiment is not consistent with any principle of religion, wisdom, or common sense.

¹ Exod. xxiv. 6, et seq.

² Gen. xlix.; 1 Kings, c. ii. al. 3 Kings, c. ii.

Our intimate conviction, relative to the meaning of these celebrated words of the institution, is greatly strengthened, when we consider that our Redeemer designed to enact a law, and to publish a dogma. Agreeably to this view of the subject, who ever heard of a practical precept enjoined in tropes and figures, or, at least, so concealed, as to leave its nature and description a matter of conjecture? who ever published a tenet in the language of metaphor or metonymy?

I am perfectly aware, that no forced interpretation, no fallacy, no quibble, is spared by Calvin, Zuinglius, Bucer, Peter Martyr, and a nameless list of ignoble persons, to wrest these words of the institution from their natural meaning, and to obscure that, which our Redeemer made so clear. But to all examples of this nature which are produced, one short answer is amply sufficient. Whenever a figurative expression, or an allegorical passage occurs, you immediately see its nature and tendency, and you are under no apprehension of being deceived. Thus, when our Redeemer calls himself *the door*, *the vine*, he fully explains his meaning; when he speaks of the leaven of the Pharisees, he satisfies the inquiries of his friends. When in the present instance he talks of the chalice of the new testament, he employs indeed a figure in these words, but a figure, plain, clear, obvious, and embodied in the discourse of the lowest of man-

kind, who perform an act of hospitality to a neighbour. But because tropes, figures, and allegories, are employed in various parts of the Scripture, and admit of an easy explanation, does it follow that a figurative explanation is to be introduced, when it is positively inconsistent with the circumstances? If sometimes our Redeemer uses a figurative expression, are we to infer that he *always* spoke in figures; and that particularly when, at the eve of his departure from the world, he was instituting a sacrament—was making his last will and testament—was framing a law and establishing a dogma, he deviated from the ordinary rules of prudence? Let us hear no more of such impious absurdities. If any discussion has a claim to the credit of settling a question, it is apparent that these plain observations on the memorable words of Christ, at his last supper, are fully sufficient to satisfy a candid inquirer, and to bring all contest on the subject to a final close.

That nothing, however, may be wanting to give weight to the Catholic belief, let us listen to St. Paul, who surely may be supposed to understand the meaning of Christ on all points of religious discussion. What then does St. Paul say on the subject? *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the*

*communion of the body of Christ*¹? and again², *Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.* Here St. Paul, in the first passage, evidently declares his belief on the subject, by boldly asking a question in a tone which presupposes an intimate conviction, that the body and blood of Christ are really received by the faithful. In the second passage, he institutes a comparison between a participation of the sacrifices of the Gentiles and those of the Christians; and he roundly declares it incompatible with the duty of his flock to partake of both. Now the sacrifices of the Pagans consisted of real victims; consequently St. Paul must be understood to refer to a real victim, namely, the body and blood of our Redeemer really present, though in an invisible and sacramental form.

St. John Chrysostom, writing on the first passage, thus clearly and emphatically expresses himself: "The meaning of these words is, that what is contained in the chalice, is the same that flowed from the side of Christ, and of that we partake³."

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16.

² V. 21.

³ "Ο γὰρ λέγει, τῷτο ἔστιν· ὅτι τῷτο τὸ, ἐν ποτηρίῳ ὄν. ἐκεινὸ ἐστι τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς πλευρᾶς ρεῦσαν, καὶ ἐκεῖνα μετέχομεν.
—St. Chrys. sup. cap. x. ad. 1 Cor. v. 16; Hom. xxiv. p. 396, tom. 3. edit. Savil.

If the reader will turn to the next chapter, he will find a declaration of the great apostle couched in terms still more explicit. After recording the institution, and representing the holy mysteries as showing forth the death of the Lord, he adds, *Wherefore whoever shall eat this bread, or drink¹ this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, NOT DISCERNING the Lord's BODY²*. Attend, catechist, with every Protestant reader; weigh well this unequivocal declaration, and tell me, why is all this solemnity of menace—this denunciation of vengeance here introduced, if the whole crime of the unworthy communicant is to be reduced to the act of taking a morsel of bread, and of drinking a drop of wine, in honour of our Redeemer, though in a state of sin. But particularly, how is the unfortunate wretch to fall under the heaviest weight of divine vengeance for an eternity, for *not discerning the body of the Lord*, if the Lord's body be not there to be discerned. To add one word more, by way of comment, on this celebrated passage, would be an insult to the understanding of the most illiterate reader.

¹ ἢ πίην.

² 1 Cor. xi. 27, 28, 29.

If to all these demonstrative and invincible proofs, drawn from the word of God, we add the authority of that church which Christ promised to protect for ever, nothing surely will be wanting to afford conviction to the candid inquirer on this most important subject. That the Catholic church has ever taught, that Christ is really present in the holy sacrament, and really received by the faithful, is a fact which cannot be questioned. Her decisions on the subject have been uniform and invariable. That no doubt may remain in the minds of Protestants concerning this matter, I will here produce a most important document from the first general council of Nice, held in the year 325 ; a period, when the most distinguished among the Protestant controversial writers acknowledge the church to have maintained the purity of faith unsullied¹. The words of the council are: " Again let us not be, in an abject manner, intent on the bread before us and the chalice on the divine table ; but raising up our minds, let us understand, by the dictates of our faith, that on this sacred table is placed the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, and is in an unbloody manner immolated by the priests, and that we *truly* take his precious body and

¹ Whitaker on Antichrist, p. 31 ; Jewel's Answer to Harding, p. 246 ; Fulke's Confutation of Purgatory, p. 373 ; Usher's Religion of the Ancient Irish, p. 87.

blood, and believe those mysteries to be the symbols of our resurrection¹." This testimony is acknowledged by Calvin², though he labours unsuccessfully to explain it away. What can be more appropriate to our present purpose, than this decisive testimony of the first general council of the church, in which the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, both as a sacrament and a sacrifice, is forcibly held up to view, in terms of the clearest import? in which it is asserted, that the external appearances are not only to be attended to; but where faith is to lead the Christian to see that our Redeemer is really present; that he is sacrificed in an unbloody manner; and that his body and blood are really received by the faithful?

An apprehension of swelling these observations to an immeasurable length, altogether prevents me from accumulating an infinite number of passages, to prove this essential dogma, from the holy fathers of every age, from the early days of St. Clement and St. Ignatius the martyr, to the period when St. Thomas of Aquin, in the thirteenth century, astonished the world by the extent of his learning, and the number and variety of his works. Let it therefore be deemed sufficient to select a few testimonies from the most eminent of those fathers, who lived within

¹ Concil. Nicæn. Actis ejusdem e Cod. Vat.

² Inst. lib. iv. c. 17, No. 36.

the periods allowed by Protestants to be altogether pure.

In the fourth age, the great St. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, speaking of the holy Eucharist, has the following passage: "If the Word was truly made flesh, and we really receive the Word thus made flesh, in the Lord's supper, how can he be supposed not naturally to remain in us?" And again, on the same subject: "As to the reality of his flesh and blood, there is no room left for a doubt; for by his declaration, and the dictates of our faith, there is truly his flesh, and truly his blood¹." The man who contradicts this plain testimony, may as well shut his eyes, and declare the sun not to be above the horizon at noon.

But no one among the holy fathers has held language of a more decisive nature on this subject than St. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, who flourished in the middle of the fourth century. To be convinced of this, I beg the learned reader to give a deliberate attention to the *whole* of the twenty-second Catechetical Discourse, which is the fourth of those called the Mystagogic Instructions. It is professedly on the subject of the body and blood of Christ. Our present limits admit only of a few extracts. This father, after citing the words of St. Paul², says, in clear terms, "This instruction of St. Paul is sufficient

¹ St. Hil. de Trinitat. lib. viii. No. 14.

² 1 Cor. xi. 23, et seq.

to remove all doubt on the subject of the divine mysteries ; by which *you have been made worthy to partake of the body and blood of Christ*¹." And again, after citing the words of the institution, he exclaims : " Since then he has thus affirmed and pronounced of the bread, *this is my body*, who will hereafter dare to doubt it? and since he has affirmed and declared, *this is my blood*, who will call it in question, by saying this is not his blood? He once turned water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana of Galilee; and is he the less worthy of credit, when he changed wine into his sacred blood? *Wherefore, with the utmost degree of certainty, let us receive these mysteries as the body and blood of Christ; for under the appearance of bread, is given to thee the body; and under the appearance of wine, is given to thee the blood; that by partaking of the body and blood of Christ, thou mayest be, in a manner, incorporated with the body and blood*²."—Ὡστε μετὰ πάσης πληροφορίας ὡς σώματος καὶ αἵματος μεταλαμβάνωμεν Χριστῷ· ἐν τύπῳ γὰρ ἄρτε δίδοται σοι τὸ σῶμα· καὶ ἐν τύπῳ οἴνου δίδοται τὸ αἷμα· ἵνα γένη μεταλαβὼν σώματος καὶ αἵματος Χριστοῦ, συσσωμος καὶ συναιμος αὐτοῦ. No words, that language can supply, can

¹ Συσσωμοὶ καὶ συναιμοὶ τῷ Χριστῷ γεγόνατε.

² See works of St. Cyril, edit. Don Touttée, p. 319, et seq. Cat. 22, Mystag. iv. No. 1, 2, et 3.

possibly exceed these, in clearly describing the Catholic faith on the subject.

But as it is not the privilege of every mortal, to behold the splendour of the noonday sun, there have been persons who have called in question the faith of St. Cyril on the subject, because in the same discourse¹, he says, that the Jews, to whom Christ addressed himself in the sixth chapter of St. John, did not hear him spiritually, or with the eyes of the spirit, and that they were scandalized, and went away. What man in his senses can imagine, that this observation of St. Cyril cancels the strong declarations which we have here produced? The holy father unquestionably blames the Jews for not understanding the words of Christ in a more spiritual and refined sense; and indeed they are justly entitled to the severest censure; for, agreeably to their carnal notions, they imagined that the flesh of Christ was to be cut and distributed for their corporeal sustenance; not understanding, that the soul was to be nourished in a spiritual and sacramental form. This is the meaning of St. Cyril; and as a proof of the correctness of this statement, let the reader look at his subsequent words², which are not to be exceeded in clearness: "Do not attend to the elemental appearance of bread and wine, for

¹ No. 4.

² No. 6, *ibid.*

they are the body and blood of Christ, according to our Lord's declaration. *If the senses should suggest another notion, let faith be your voucher, and your assurance.* Do not judge of the thing from the taste; but be assured beyond doubt, from the dictates of your faith, that you are thought worthy of receiving the body and blood of Christ¹."

Μὴ πρόσεχε ἕν ὡς ψιλοῖς τῷ ἄρτῳ καὶ τῷ ὄινῳ· σῶμα γὰρ καὶ αἷμα Χριστοῦ, κατὰ τὴν δεσποτικὴν τυγχάνει ἀπόφασιν. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις σοι τῆτο ὑπόβαλλει, ἀλλὰ ἡ πίστις σε βεβαιεῖτω. Μὴ ἀπὸ τῆς γένσεως κρίνης τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως πληροφορεῖ ἀνενδοιάστως σώματος καὶ αἵματος Χριστοῦ καταξιωθείς.

Again I request the attention of the learned reader to this passage, and indeed to the *whole* of this discourse; and if he should not be convinced that St. Cyril here delivers the Catholic doctrine without disguise, I advise him to compose a treatise, in order to prove, that there is no certitude under heaven.

The writings of the great St. Augustine and of the illustrious St. John Chrysostom, are literally full of the clearest and most incontrovertible evidence on the subject of the Catholic doctrine relative to the holy Eucharist. Not to tire the patience of the learned reader, I beg him to give his attention to the passages here referred to. "One is the passover," says he, "which they (the Jews) celebrate in

¹ Ibid. No. 6.

eating the lamb ; another is that which we receive in the body and blood of our Lord¹."

The comparison here introduced by the holy father, evidently requires that the expressions be referred to the body and blood in a literal sense².

Nothing can be more clear, precise, and eloquent, than the language which St. John Chrysostom uniformly employs on this momentous subject. In his celebrated commentaries on St. Matthew's gospel, he says : " Let us under all circumstances give credit to God ; and by no means contradict him, however his word *may appear repugnant to our reason and to our senses* : but let his word preponderate over our reason and our senses. This conduct we must hold respecting the sacred mysteries, where we are not to look only at what is before us, but to attend to his declaration. By his word, we cannot be deceived ; by our senses, we are easily led into error : his word has never failed ; our senses often prove fallacious. Since therefore, he has said, *this is my body, let us give him our undoubted assent*, and view the object with the eyes of the soul³. The extreme clearness of

¹ Contra lit. Petil. liv. ii. c. 37.

² See also lib. i.

contra Crescon. c. xxv. et Enarr. in Psal. xxxiii. conc. 1.

³ Πειθόμεθα τοίνυν πανταχοῦ τῷ θεῷ, καὶ μηδὲν ἀντιλέγωμεν, καὶ ἐναντίον εἶναι δοκῇ τοῖς ἡμετέροις λογισμοῖς καὶ ταῖς ὁψεσι τὸ λεγόμενον· ἀλλ' ἔστω καὶ λογισμῶν καὶ ὁψεως κυριώ-

this passage renders all elaborate comment wholly unnecessary. For it cannot escape the attention of the most illiterate reader, that St. Chrysostom views in the holy Eucharist a *mystery, above the reach of the senses and the reason, to be believed on the authority of God alone*; while modern innovators, called Reformers, see in this sacrament an empty figure only, which requires no effort of faith¹.

As the doctrine of the Greek church is frequently referred to by Protestants, and as it is of extreme weight in confirming Catholic tenets, where both churches are clearly agreed, I will produce unexceptionable evidence of this perfect agreement from a work already cited. In various and multiplied documents preserved in this performance, the language on all the controverted points between Protestants and Catholics is precisely the same as that held by the Catholic church. In the attestation signed by the seven archbishops of the east, is the

τερος αὐτῷ ὁ λόγος. ἔτω καὶ, ἐπὶ τῶν μυστηρίων ποιῶμεν, ἐ τοῖς κειμένοις μόνον ἐμβλέποντες, ἀλλὰ τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῷ κατέχοντες. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ λόγος αὐτῷ ἀπαραλόγιστος, ἡ δὲ αἴσθησις ἡμῶν ἐν εξαπάτητος· ὅτος ὁδέποτε διέπεσεν, αὐτῇ δὲ τὰ πλείονα σφάλεται. Ἐπεὶ ὅν ὁ λόγος φῆσι, τῷτο ἔστι τὸ σῶμά μου, καὶ πειθώμεθα καὶ πιστενῶμεν, καὶ νοητοῖς αὐτὸ βλέπωμεν ὀφθαλμοῖς. —Hom. 82, ol. 83, in Matt. p. 513, tom. 2, edit. Savil.

¹ See also a splendid passage, Hom. 24, in 1 ad Cor. p. 401, tom. iii. et lib. 3, de Sacerdot. versus Inst. pp. 15 et 16, tom. vi. edit. Savil.

following passage: "First of all, as to the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, we affirm, that the living body of Jesus Christ, who was crucified, who ascended to heaven, and who is seated at the right hand of the Father, *is truly present in the Eucharist, but invisible.* 2. That the bread and wine, after the invocation of the priest, and after the consecration, *are changed from their proper substance into the true body and blood of Jesus Christ*; and that, though the accidents that remain, preserve the appearances of bread and wine, they are however neither bread nor wine¹." Here let me ask the catechist, or rather let me appeal to the highest authorities in the Protestant world, and inquire, how it is possible to account for this perfect agreement on these articles between the Greek and Latin churches, the former of which has been separated from the latter, with the exception of some short intervals, by a schism of nearly a thousand years, unless they had both derived the same doctrine from the earliest period of Christianity. The appearance of these documents, with the inevitable consequences to be drawn from them, had such an effect on the illustrious Claud, the leader of the French Calvinists, that he could not believe his own senses; but wrote

¹ See *Perpetuité de la Foi*, tom. iii. p. 412; and consult the whole series of documents, *ibid.* 406—586, comprising the whole eighth book.

himself to a learned Greek to verify the facts. The learned Grecian, well versed in the Latin language, sent him in reply a long dissertation, comprising seven pages in quarto; in which he demonstrates the antiquity of the doctrine of the real presence and transubstantiation, and declares that the east and west were always agreed on the subject. I have this celebrated letter before me, bearing the date of May 21, 1672, and I once intended to give the whole in an appendix, with some other of those documents. But on a second consideration I think that a short extract will suffice, which is taken from the second paragraph. “Notum sit itaque tibi, præstantissime vir, quod totus oriens, consentientem habens et occidentem, credidit semper et credit a primis ecclesiæ incunabulis, *panem et vinum verè et physicè transubstantiari in corpus et sanguinem Christi depositâ primâ substantiâ*, et hanc transubstantiationem tenet inter articulos fidei necessarios, adeo ut nemini liceat eam ignorare, aut in dubium revocare, aut penitus rejicere. Hanc autem fidem habuit a Christo, et post successionem ab apostolis et a patribus primitivæ ecclesiæ, qui columnæ fuerunt et fundamentum orthodoxiæ Græcanicæ.”—“Be it therefore known to you, most excellent sir, that the whole east, with the consent of the west, *does believe, and has always believed from the earliest period of the church, that the bread and wine are truly*

and physically transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ, laying aside their first substance; and this transubstantiation she (the whole eastern church) holds among the necessary articles of faith; so that it is unlawful for any one to be ignorant of it, to call it in question, or altogether to reject it. This faith she has derived from Christ, and after him from the apostles and fathers of the primitive church, who were the pillars and foundation of Grecian orthodoxy¹."

After this decisive declaration obtained by Claud himself, his arms fell from his hands; and from that period, a deep silence has generally been observed on the subject of the doctrines of the Greek church, except among the uninformed, who never heard of these transactions, or the artful, who still wish to propagate the delusion.

Having given these ample documents, all clearly proving the real presence and transubstantiation, I deem it time to reply to the statements of the catechist. This task, however, does not demand a great detail, after the lengthened observations on the subject.

I. The catechist observes, that our senses contradict transubstantiation; that the sight, the feeling, the taste, and smell, present bread and wine only; and that by denying our senses, we shake the foundations of religion.

¹ See book 8, vol. iii. p. 480—487.

This objection might possess its due weight, if the sight, the feeling, the smell, and the taste, were designed by God to be the channels by which faith is conveyed to the soul. But the fact is very far otherwise, as we learn from the express declaration of St. Paul : according to his doctrine, *faith cometh by hearing*¹. When, therefore, we *hear* the declaration of our Redeemer, and have it explained by that competent authority, which he has established, the testimony of the senses can have no weight. The sense of *hearing* leads a Christian to listen to divine revelation ; reason suggests that God is to be heard in preference to any human authority ; and thus both sense and reason yield an implicit obedience to faith. What other mode have we of descrying, with the wise men from the east, a God in the form of an infant ? How should we convince the infidel of the truth of the incarnation by any other process ? Those, therefore, who give such an authority to the senses, as to contradict revelation, are the persons who undermine the foundations of religion. Let the reader view this conclusive argument, displayed by Dryden, in numbers exquisitely beautiful :—

“ Can I believe eternal God could lie
Disguised in mortal mould and infancy ?
That the great Maker of the world could die ?

¹ Rom. x. 17.

And, after that, trust my imperfect *sense*,
 Which calls in question his omnipotence !
 Can I my reason to my faith compel,
 And shall my sight, and touch, and taste, rebel ?
 Superior faculties are set aside ;
 Shall their subservient organs be my guide ?
 Then let the moon usurp the rule of day,
 And winking tapers show the sun his way.
 For what my *senses can themselves* perceive,
 I need no revelation to believe."

HIND AND PANTHER, Part 1.

II. It is said to be against reason, that Christ's body and blood should be in many places at once ; or in other words, it is often asked, how is it possible that Christ can be sitting at the right hand of the Father and be at the same time on millions of altars ? I must answer this question by asking many others : How did God create the world out of nothing ? How is it possible, that three divine persons, perfectly distinct, should subsist in one divine nature ? That all three should be God, and yet that there should be but one God ? How can the bodies, which we now possess moulder away, crumble into dust, and afterwards rise at the last day, endued with such qualities, as induced St. Paul to call them *spiritual bodies*¹ ? Many persons, as wise in their own estimation as the catéchist, have called in question these truths, which my opponent by the terms of his communion is

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 44.

obliged to admit. What will he reply to infidels of this description, but that, *with God all things are possible*¹, or with St. Augustine, “*tota ratio facti est potentia facientis?*” The whole reason of the deed is the power of him who performs it. Did not our Redeemer prepare his hearers for this difficulty, when he represented it to them as likely to be greater in their opinion after his ascension, than before²? Is it not clear, that he appeared in person to St. Paul³; and if while sitting at the right hand of the Father, he could really and in person appear to St. Paul, what should hinder him from multiplying the miracle, as often as he may please? Those, therefore, who admit professedly revealed truths of any description, cannot consistently withhold their assent to similar points, properly attested, in consequence of any difficulties which corrupted reason may raise. For though it is perfectly correct to say, that the works of God are above the reach of reason, it is false to assert, that they are contrary to reason. For nothing can be more rational than for the creature to listen to the voice of his creator.

III. If St. Paul⁴ calls the holy sacrament bread after the consecration, the reason is clear, because it retains the appearance of bread. Our

¹ Matt. xix. 26.

² John vi. 62.

³ Acts ix. 5, et seq.; item, v. 8, et seq.; item, xxvi. 12, et seq.

⁴ 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28.

Redeemer had used the same language, and for the same reason, when he promises the favour¹. But he clearly promised, that what preserved this appearance should be his flesh for the life of the world : and St. Paul, in a chapter referred to, declares the unworthy communicant to eat and drink his own damnation, *not discerning the body of the Lord*. Nothing is so common in the sacred Scripture as to denominate objects, not from their intrinsic nature and qualities, but from the actual appearances which they exhibit. Thus, in various passages, angels appearing in human form, are called men from the external appearance which they display².

IV. Transubstantiation is said to be contrary to the nature of a sacrament, for the reasons here assigned. This notion is perfectly unfounded ; for a sacrament is an external sign of inward grace ; and though the miracle performed by Christ, through the ministry of his priests, changes the substance of the sign, it does not remove the *external appearance* : and his assuredly is sufficient to preserve the nature of the sacrament. Let those rather be charged with destroying the sacrament, who deny the internal gift, and reduce the whole to a bare commemorative rite.

V. It is asserted, that the words of Christ,

¹ John vi. 51.

² See Josh. v. 13 ; St. Luke xxiv. 4 ; Acts i. 10.

this is my body, infer not transubstantiation. The reader will assuredly acknowledge, that it has been clearly, distinctly, and unequivocally proved, that these celebrated words infer a real presence of our Redeemer. Now a real presence imports a real change of the substance of that which was the matter of the sacrament into the body and blood of Christ. This part of the argument is conceded by the Sacramentarians themselves, in opposition to Luther. That patriarch of the Reformation is known not to have denied the real presence, but to have invented his singular system of consubstantiation. In opposition to this notion, Calvin and his party declared, that if this doctrine of the real presence were once admitted, transubstantiation must inevitably follow. Hear the remarkable declaration of this rival in the boasted operation of reform: "The sense of the words of the institution, *this is my body*, taken literally, cannot stand without a change of the bread into the body of Christ; so that the visible bread may become the invisible body¹." "Either our figure or their transubstantiation must follow," exclaimed Beza against the Lutherans; "for you cannot insist on the literal sense of the words, *this is my body*, without plainly establishing transubstantiation²."

¹ See Calvin's Second Defence against Westphalius, p. 664.

² Vide Bez. contra Lutheranos passim, sed præsert. de Cœnâ Dom. p. 216.

The same sentiments precisely are expressed by Zuinglius¹. The real presence has been very clearly proved ; and the direct inference of Calvin, Beza, and Zuinglius, in that supposition, is justified by the very nature of the terms employed. For our Redeemer does not say, *here is my body* ; but, *this is my body* ; just as if he had said at the marriage-feast of Cana of Galilee, *This is wine* ; meaning practically and efficiently to produce a miraculous change. It is curious to remark, that agreeably to the statements here given and taken from the admissions of the reforming doctors themselves, their opinions united together, strongly inforce the Catholic doctrine on this most important subject. This most singular fact, I, with all due solemnity, recommend to the serious consideration of the catechist.

As to the observation that some learned men among the Catholics have admitted, that transubstantiation is not to be inferred from the words of the institution, this, in the sense which the catechist would insinuate, is altogether *untrue*. No writer of any *weight* or *consideration* ever made such an unqualified admission, *without reproach, and without censure*.

Writers have, in some instances, laboured to explain the mode in which the mystery is performed, in a way peculiar to themselves ; and

¹ See Exeg. contra Lutherum, p. 336 ; also his work, De Coenâ Dni, fol. 275.

have often merited severe animadversion. But the existence of the mystery as contained in the words of the institution, is an essential tenet never denied by any within the pale of the church. Besides, the doctrine of the church is not to be collected from the systems of individual writers, but from documents approved by the body of the pastors, and particularly by the sovereign pontiff.

VI. The observations in this corresponding number, have already received a full and ample reply.

VII. The remark in this number, that the Catholic cannot be sure of the change, because it must depend on the intention of the priest, presses most severely on the catechist himself. How can he be assured that he is baptized, and that he has received that sacrament, without which he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven¹; since the due administration of this essential rite must, from the nature of the thing, depend upon the intention of the minister? The catechist has more to fear in this instance than the Catholic; for, independently of the intention of Protestant ministers, which can be ascertained only by the Searcher of hearts, those persons are known to be extremely careless and indifferent in the application of the essential matter and form of this sacrament.

¹ John iii. 5.

VIII. The *pretended* absurdities here enumerated, are not so great as those which were alleged by the Jews, the Sadducees, and the Pagans, against the mysteries of the trinity, the incarnation, and the resurrection. Does the catechist join in the taunts and sarcasms of those infidels, against all that is most sacred in religion? Does he believe in the babe of Bethlehem with the wise men from the east, in opposition to the Jew and Gentile? And will he reject other mysteries, not on the ground that they were not revealed, but because they are exposed to the scoff of the unbeliever? St. Augustine will tell him that we should never believe in Christ, if our faith were to apprehend the sneer of the infidel.

IX. That the doctrine of transubstantiation is contrary to the belief of the primitive church, is a proposition which can never be maintained with any semblance of truth. The reverse is unquestionably certain, as appears from the ample and copious documents which I have produced from the earliest ages. If the holy fathers, in speaking on the subject, sometimes call the sacramental or consecrated bread, a figure, type, or sign, they mean nothing more than that under *these external appearances* is really contained the body of our Redeemer. But in no instance *whatever*, did any father of the church call the holy sacrament of the altar, a

figure only, to the exclusion of the real presence : and to bring any thing like argument against the Catholic doctrine, such an instance must be produced.

X. The assertions contained in this number are complete falsehoods, which are contradicted by the authorities already produced, and particularly by the striking passage from the council of Nice, held in 325. The reader has already seen, that in this first general council, it was defined, that the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world, is immolated in an unbloody manner on the altar, and that his body and blood are received by the faithful as symbols of our resurrection¹. It is true, that transubstantiation was defined an article of Catholic faith in the council of Lateran, held in 1215 ; but the same thing happened respecting the doctrine of the blessed trinity, and that of the general resurrection, with many other articles of the Catholic faith. But this circumstance affords not the shadow of a proof, that these articles were not held as essential points of belief before that period. It is the common practice of general councils to recount and enforce the various tenets of faith, which had been before defined and held in the church².

XI. The observations contained in the cor-

¹ See loc. cit. p. 74 et 75.

² See Conc. Trident. passim, and compare with Summa Conc. Florent. apud Carranza, fol. 351 ; item Conc. Lateran. fol. 324.

responding number, scarcely merit a reply, after the lengthened dissertation which we have given on this interesting matter. That the sacrament of the altar is a memorial of our Redeemer's passion, is perfectly true; but that it is a *bare and empty* memorial, to the *exclusion of his real presence*, is a position wholly untenable, and contradicted by the invincible evidence which has been exposed to the reader.

1. It is not true, that the Protestant doctrine is agreeable to the nature of a sacrament. A sacrament as such requires real, invisible, internal grace; which the Protestant doctrine completely annuls, by reducing the sacrament to a pure sign, and an empty memorial; and thus are destroyed the nature and essence of that noble and dignified sacrament, which agreeably to our preceding proofs, Christ designed to institute.

2. Those words, *do this in remembrance of me*, do not import the absence of the object; for remembrance is not opposed to absence, but to forgetfulness. Christ, therefore, invisibly present under a sacramental form, is a standing memorial of the visible and bloody tragedy of his sacred passion and death.

3. The statements in this third number have been already refuted.

4. The text from Exodus xii. 11, has often been brought to give a figurative meaning to the

words of the institution, but without effect. Let the reader have before him the whole context, and then let him judge of the flimsy nature of the argument: *And thus shall ye eat it with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat in haste; for it is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through Egypt this night, and will smite all the first born, &c.* These words imply no figure; for they do not mean, this is a memorial of the passover, but this is the *time* when the Lord shall pass through Egypt. The argument, therefore, drawn from this passage, falls to the ground.

5. In answer to the last observations of the catechist, the great inconvenience of the Protestant doctrine is, that it is *not true*; as we have clearly proved; while the alleged absurdities charged on the Catholic tenet, exist only in the imagination of the writer.

Having here given what a candid inquirer will assuredly deem the most copious and satisfactory grounds, for professing the Catholic doctrine on the real presence and transubstantiation, I may now with propriety, and not without an air of conscious triumph, solemnly ask the catechist and his friends, why *they* should rudely bring against this belief, the atrocious charges of novelty, of absurdity, and even of superstition and idolatry? Let them patiently recollect, that

the doctrine of the real corporal presence of Christ, on which these dark accusations are founded, was originally the real belief of the Church of England by law established in the reign of Edward VI. ; that the catechism in the Common Prayer-book, proclaims aloud at this day that the BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST ARE *VERILY* AND *INDEED* RECEIVED BY THE FAITHFUL IN THE LORD'S SUPPER ; that the declaration, inserted at the end of the communion service, expressly contradicting this same doctrine conveyed in these unambiguous terms, was subsequently adopted by the influence of the Calvinistic party ; that this same declaration was repealed early in the reign of Elizabeth ; and that it was not replaced in the situation which it now occupies, till the period of the Restoration. It thus appears, that the church of England by law established, was, in this particular, at first Catholic and then Protestant ; that she again became Catholic, or in other words, relapsed into what is termed idolatry, *and remained immersed in it, about a period of one hundred years ;* but that she then rose in the meridian splendour of Protestant effulgence, which still continues to beam on her enlightened children. Of these singular facts, Protestant writers are unaccountably very willing witnesses ; but instead of loading my pages with unnecessary references, I

will transcribe from a Protestant author, now living, a fair and candid avowal of the whole proceeding :—

“ It is granted,” says Mr. Grier, “ that our first liturgy in 1548, *expressed*, as might naturally be expected, the *Popish idea* of the real presence. But in its next revision in 1552, a rubric was added, expressly *denying* the tenet. Queen Elizabeth, however,—who had not yet imbibed the pure spirit of Christianity, which had guided her youthful predecessor, and the venerable Cranmer,—expunged it in 1559 ; ‘ her design being to unite the nation in one faith ¹.’ The contrivance had the desired effect ; as the Popish laity continued in connexion with the church of England for ten years, and only broke off when she refused to acknowledge the Pope’s supremacy. In 1661, after the Restoration, the old anti-popish rubric of King Edward’s second book was *restored*, and holds its place in our liturgy without *alteration* to this day. These stages mark the successive improvements which it received ². ”

Here then, intelligent reader, you have a fair, an open, and an undisguised acknowledgment, from the pen of a professed champion of the

¹ 1 Burnett’s Hist. of the Ref. vol. ii. p. 390.

² Grier’s Reply to the End of Religious Controversy, pp. 141 et 142.

established church, that the church which he defends has been often shifting her ground, and varying her belief, on this most essential article : and these changes are termed **IMPROVEMENTS** !!! What is this, but to own that divine faith forms no part of their religious system ; and that the truths which they profess, are to be viewed in the light of human opinions, which may be modified, altered, and improved by successive experience ?

That this cannot be said of true, real, and saving faith, appears from its nature and object. To have divine faith on any point, we must necessarily believe some truth, revealed by God, and proposed by some competent authority ; and the truth thus believed is, of its own nature, immutable and unchangeable as the God from whom it emanates. Surely the truths revealed by God, ought not, cannot by their nature, be subject to the arbitrary and capricious devices of men. Where any variation or change can be discovered in tenets *said to be revealed*, there the nature of *divine faith* is destroyed ; and to avow such a change, and term it an *improvement*, amounts to an acknowledgment, that such a system of religion, as authorizes the alteration, and is subject to such vicissitudes, consists of a *mass of human opinions*, ever variable and shifting, and in a ceaseless round of fluctuation and uncertainty.

Such is the inevitable consequence of this avowal ; of which it may be asserted without any extravagant exaggeration, that never did a professed and official defender give a more deadly blow to the cause which he espoused.

Perhaps this writer may allege in his own defence, that I rate too high the properties of divine faith, and that my demands are exorbitant, in requiring that faith should always be *invariable*. Let us then see the description of divine faith, as given by a Protestant archbishop of Canterbury. "To believe, in general," says Dr. Wake, "*is to assent to the truth of any thing, upon the sole authority of the person who delivers it ; who, if he be a man only, the assent which I give to what he says, produces in me a human faith : if, as here, he be God, then the assent which I give to what is delivered, becomes properly a divine faith*¹." I now request Mr. Grier and the catechist, to weigh well this description of divine faith, given by one of their illustrious archbishops of Canterbury ; and I leave to them jointly to determine, whether any man, or any set of men, after receiving any tenet as divinely revealed, can, consistently with this notion of divine faith, make an alteration in the article

¹ The Principles of the Christian Religion explained by Dr. William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, part ii. sec. 6, p. 26, 7th edit. Lond. 1757.

thus delivered, and call such a change an *improvement*. With this recommendation, I beg leave to drop the curtain, and terminate this long discussion, on one of the leading tenets of the Christian religion.

QUESTION X.

Why do you think it unlawful for laymen to receive the communion in one kind only?

ANSWER.

1. Because Christ saith expressly to the disciples, not only "Take, eat," but also, "drink ye all of this," Matt. xxvi. 27.
2. The practice of the universal Church of Christ, for a thousand years together, is against it.
3. It is a novelty; for the council of Constance, in the year 1416, was the first that durst venture upon this sacrilege, and deprive the laity of the cup in the sacrament, notwithstanding Christ's institution, and the practice of the primitive church.
4. The priests in the Church of Rome dare not consecrate without the cup, nor look upon the sacrament as perfect without it, nor receive it without the cup; and if the neglect of it be sinful to them, must it not be so to the laity?
5. All the Eastern Churches at this day communicate the laity in both kinds, and think it unlawful to do otherwise.
6. As much as the Church of Rome is against the laity's communion in both kinds, time was, when one of their own popes, Gelasius by name, who lived about five hundred years after Christ, said, "Let the people either participate of both parts of the sacrament, or be hindered and kept from both."
7. What they say of receiving whole Christ, or the whole sacrament in one kind, besides that they have the institution of the sacrament against them, how can they receive whole Christ in one kind, when they make this sacrament a sacrifice, where the blood must be separated from the body, else it is not considered as shed? and how can they receive the whole sacrament in one kind, when the sacrament consists of two distinct parts by their own confession?
8. In communicating in one kind only, the significancy of the

sacrament is destroyed: for it is a representation of our Lord's death, and how can that death be represented, without representing the separation of his flesh and blood? And how can they commemorate this separation, without receiving them separated?

OBSERVATIONS.

ON the subject of receiving the holy communion under one kind only, the catechist, with the whole host of reformers, raises an indecent and an irrational clamour. With what consistency can they arraign the practice of the Catholic church, in the dispensation of the sacred mysteries, who have rejected five sacraments out of seven, and who have reduced the most holy and dignified of all these sacraments to a mere commemorative rite? How can that be termed a sacrilegious robbery, which, *according to their belief*, deprives the laity only of the advantage of drinking a drop of wine, in honour of the sufferings of our Redeemer? In fact, the charge brought against the Catholic church on this subject, is altogether unnatural and inconsistent; and we have to place this discussion on a fair and substantial ground, by asking, if Christ has clearly and imperatively required, that the laity should communicate under both kinds, or whether communion under one kind only, be really all that is *essentially* enjoined.

In determining this question, it appears, that no rational doubt can be entertained. For

though our Redeemer consecrated under both kinds, and directed his apostles, as priests, to imitate his example, he has left no precise order, by which the laity are bound to follow the same mode. He who says¹, *except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*, clearly refers to the substance of the thing, not to the mode; for, on the same occasion, he declares in precise terms², *if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever*: and again³, *this is the bread that came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth this bread sha'l live for ever*.

Here then we have the promise of eternal life, made to those who partake of the sacrament under the form of bread only: and agreeably to the narrative of St. Luke⁴, we find the same practice of communicating under one form, ascribed to the apostles and the first disciples. They are there represented, as persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, in the communication of the breaking of BREAD, and of prayer. This is understood by the best commentators to refer to the eucharistic bread, which the first Christians not unfrequently received under that form only.

St. Augustine, speaking of the fact recorded

¹ John vi. 53.

² Ibid. v. 51.

³ Ibid. v. 58.

⁴ Acts ii. 42.

by St. Luke, concerning the two disciples going to Emmaus¹, and of the circumstance of their knowing Christ in the breaking of bread, unhesitatingly understands it of the eucharistic bread, or of the body of Christ under the form of bread. His words are too remarkable to be omitted. "Non autem incongruenter accipimus, hoc impedimentum in oculis eorum a Satana factum fuisse, ne agnosceretur Jesus : sed tamen a Christo est facta permissio usque ad SACRAMENTUM PANIS ; UT UNITATE CORPORIS EJUS PARTICIPATÂ, removeri intelligatur impedimentum inimici, ut Christus possit agnosci²."—"We may not unseasonably suppose, that Satan raised this impediment to the sight of these disciples, that they might not recognise Jesus : Christ, however, permitted it, till the reception of the sacrament of bread ; that having partaken of the unity of his body, they might clearly understand the impediment, raised by the enemy, to be removed, that Christ might be acknowledged." The authority of St. Augustine thus directs us to believe, that these disciples received from the hands of our Redeemer himself the holy sacrament under the form of bread alone ; and however a contrary practice may have prevailed in his church, for more than a thousand years, yet we find, in various instances, even during that

¹ Luke xxiv. 13, et seq. ² St. Aug. de Consensu Evangelist : lib. 3, c. 25, tom. iv. p. 195, edit. Paris.

period of time, that the faithful adopted, by the connivance and with the consent of their pastors, the practice of communicating under one form only.

Those who possess the slightest knowledge of Christian antiquity, must be aware that during the period referred to, it was usual to communicate the faithful, in the church and during the sacrifice, under both kinds ; but that, as it was necessary to attend to the wants of the absent, and particularly of the sick, it was customary to reserve, for that purpose, particles of the consecrated *bread only*. Of this practice relating to the sick, to children, to persons on journies, and to those who lived in times of persecution, there are incontestible and innumerable monuments beyond calculation¹. Hence the great St. Thomas of Aquin, deservedly styled the angel of the theological school, remarks, that the perfection of the sacrament of the Eucharist, consists not in the use of the faithful, but in the consecration of the matter ; and that therefore it is no derogation from the perfection of this sacrament, that the people should receive the body without the blood, provided the priest, who consecrates, receive under both kinds².

¹ See this clearly established by the pious and learned Cardinal Bona, *Rerum Liturgic.* lib. ii. c. 18.

² 3 Par. quest. 80, art. 12, ad 2.

In fact, this practice of Christian antiquity, the existence of which no man of learning ever called in question, demonstratively shews, that the custom of receiving under one or both kinds, is a mere matter of discipline, which of its own nature, is ever variable and subject to fluctuation, agreeably to such circumstances as induce the pastors of the church to alter or modify established rules. In all the changes which take place in this particular, where is the detriment suffered by the faithful? Our Redeemer, according to the doctrine of the apostle¹ is in a state of immortality, and no longer under the dominion of death; consequently where he bestows his sacred body, he by a necessary and inevitable concomitance, imparts his blood with all his treasures to a soul well disposed. Those, therefore, who annul the very essence of the sacrament, are the sacrilegious robbers who deprive the faithful of real blessings; not the pastors of the Catholic church, who suit the discipline to the variable circumstances of the times. But let us listen to the catechist, and give him a fair and impartial hearing.

I. The catechist insists, that all are to drink of the cup, because Christ says not only, *take and eat*, but *drink ye all of this*².

The answer to this is extremely simple: when

¹ Rom. vi. 9.

² Matt. xxvi. 27.

our Redeemer gave this direction, none were present with him but his twelve apostles, who were to perform the duties of the priesthood ; and to whom it became necessary to consecrate and to receive under both kinds. But if we were to apply this injunction to the laity, the argument would prove too much even in the estimation of the Protestant. For if what is here addressed to the apostles, be extended to the faithful in general, there would be the same reason for allowing the faithful to bless, break, and distribute to each other the sacrament of the Lord's supper ; for Christ also said, *do this in remembrance of me* ; and thus the most important functions of the Christian priesthood would be profaned by unhallowed hands. Is the catechist prepared to abide by this inevitable consequence of his doctrine ? If he is not, as he cannot be, let him withdraw his absurd objection.

II. In answer to the second number, the public and authorized practice for the first thousand years certainly favours communion under both kinds ; but as, agreeably to what has been proved in the leading part of this article, the church allowed, during the whole of that period, the sick, the traveller, the persecuted Christian, to receive under one kind *only*, it becomes perfectly clear, that the reception of the sacrament by the faithful under both kinds, was never judged necessary to its existence, but that it was

uniformly considered as a matter of *variable discipline*.

III. Still the catechist urges, that the practice of communicating under one kind only is a novelty; and that the council of Constance first ventured upon this sacrilege, in opposition to the institution of Christ, and the practice of the primitive church. In answer to these mis-statements, it may be with truth asserted, that the practice of communicating under one kind was no novelty, as appears from the examples already produced. If the catechist wishes for any particular instances of communion under the form of bread only, let him read the interesting story of Serapion, preserved by Eusebius¹. Let him recollect, that the great St. Basil and the illustrious St. Ambrose, the distinguished lights of the fourth century were both communicated under one kind only, a little before death, as is recorded by the respective historians of their lives². If after this, my opponent talks of novelty and sacrilege, let him remember, that this practice is tolerated even by his own church. In the order for administering the sacrament, prepared by certain bishops and clergymen, and enforced by a royal proclamation, issued by King Edward VI. in 1548, it is expressly required, that all persons are to receive under both kinds, *except neces-*

¹ Euseb. Histor. lib. vi. c. 44.

² Amphil. de Basil. Paulin. de Ambros. No. 47.

sity otherwise required. Now, catechist, thou man of *learning, candour, and impartiality*, let me ask if certain individuals, supported by *the civil authority only*, could pronounce that in cases of necessity, persons might receive under one kind only, does it not follow, that the question is not a matter affecting the essence of the sacrament, but a point of discipline, and that the whole church of Christ, assembled in a general council—assisted by our Redeemer, agreeably to his promises, and taught by the Spirit of God—could alter and modify the practice, according to the existing circumstances of the times? In all discussions of a religious nature, it may at least be demanded of us, that inconsistency and hypocrisy have no part in our proceedings.

IV. Then comes a formidable objection indeed!!! The priests of the church of Rome communicate under both kinds ; therefore it must be sinful in the laity not to do the same. Be it known, that the Catholic church regards the holy Eucharist not only as a sacrament, but as a sacrifice ; the priest consecrates under both kinds to complete the sacrifice ; the layman receives a sacrament only, by complying with the injunction of his Redeemer: *He that eats this bread shall live for ever*¹.

V. The catechist is peculiarly unfortunate, in every instance, in his appeal to the practice of

¹ John vi. 58.

the Eastern churches. For though it is admitted that the general practice of the Greek church is to receive under both kinds, yet there is a splendid exception, which is exhibited during a considerable portion of the year. Through the whole of Lent, there is no consecration performed, except on Saturdays and Sundays; and whenever priests or laymen communicate on other days during that season, they receive under one kind only, and use the consecrated bread preserved for the purpose. A vestige of this discipline is still maintained in the Western church, in the service of Good Friday¹. The appeal, therefore, to the Eastern churches proves, that both kinds are not necessary to the use of the sacrament. Besides, amidst all the angry controversies between the Greek and Latin churches, we find not the smallest contention, not even the beginning of any discussion, on this subject.

VI. The fact of Pope Gelasius having required the use of both kinds, proves directly the reverse of what the catechist intends. If that eminent pontiff thought proper to direct that communion under both kinds should be generally adopted, it

¹ See Card. Bona, loc. cit. Also the most learned work of Leo Allatius de Eccles. Occid. et Orien. Perpet. Cons. lib. 3, c. ix. No. 6, with the Dissertation ad Calc. Oper. de Miss. Præ-sinc. pp. 1542, et seq.; also Annot. Bartold. Nihus. ibid. pp. 1614, et seq.

must be clear, that communion under one kind only, had, in many instances, before prevailed ; and this is well known to those who are versed in Christian antiquity. It is likewise an additional proof, that the discipline on this point was various at different times. But the decree of Pope Gelasius, cited by Gratian¹, was directed against the Manichees, who styled wine the gall of the devil, and created by the evil principle ; and on this account they refused to receive the communion under the species of wine. In order to detect the abettors of that impious system, who sought to propagate their blasphemies by concealment and artifice, the venerable pontiff issued the decree under consideration. But no impression was meant to be excited, that communion under one kind only impaired the integrity of the sacrament². A similar order had been given about fifty years before by St. Leo the Great from the same laudable motive³.

VII. The objection contained in the seventh number, arises altogether from a confusion of ideas, and from blending together the notions of a sacrament and a sacrifice. The holy Eucharist is indeed both a sacrament and a sacrifice ; but in a very different manner, or as the schools

¹ De Consecratione distinct. 2, comperimus.

² See Card. Bona, loc. cit.

³ Vid. Serm. St. Leon. Magn. 4 de Quadras.

express it, "Sub diverso respectu." A layman receives the Lord's supper as a sacrament, without performing a sacrifice; otherwise it would follow, that every one, admitted to the participation of this heavenly food, discharges functions peculiar to the priesthood. As a sacrifice, therefore, the Eucharist requires the consecration of two distinct species; as a sacrament, it demands *necessarily* but one; for where Christ really is, there he must be found whole and entire, with all his concomitant treasures and glories.

VIII. The last objection is founded on a similar confusion of ideas. The death of our dear Redeemer is commemorated in two distinct ways; either by a lively representation, and the unbloody immolation of the sacred victim, which forms the action of the sacrifice; the second consists in receiving the sacrament to that effect; the first mode belongs to the priest—the other to the people.

QUESTION XI.

Why do you not believe a purgatory?

ANSWER.

1. Because the Scripture makes mention only of two places or states, men enter into after death, i. e. heaven and hell, taking no notice of purgatory.
2. The men they send into purgatory are good men, and true believers, and therefore in Christ Jesus; and we read, there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1.
3. Good men are said to rest from their labours, from the moment of their death, Rev. xiv. 1. And how do they rest from their labours, if they labour under torments?
4. This doctrine is injurious to the satisfaction and merits of Christ, as if they did not procure a full remission of sin, and the guilt of it, to those that belong to him.
5. In purgatory, they say, they are only venial sins that are punished; and is it rational that God forgives the greater sins, and the punishment due to them, and punishes the venial with inexpressible torments, which they themselves confess, do not interrupt the state of grace?
6. This doctrine is a novelty, and was no article of faith, no not in their own Church, till the Council of Trent.
7. It is a doctrine which people in the Church of Rome have been led into by tales and legends, and monkish stories, and is the great instrument of gain and profit.
8. The primitive church did not believe it; for the fire the fathers talked of, was a fire at the day of judgment.
9. The Greek Church at this day gives no credit to this doctrine.

10. Though the primitive church did pray for the dead, yet it was not for souls that were in torment, but for souls in a state of refreshment and felicity, that God would shew them mercy in the last day, and hasten their happy resurrection, and give them a blessed sentence.

OBSERVATIONS.

IN order to enforce the doctrine of purgatory with effect, it becomes necessary to state with clearness in what it consists. The Council of Trent¹ has in precise terms proclaimed the Catholic doctrine on the subject, when it says, that *there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are assisted by the suffrages of the faithful, and particularly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar*. By purgatory, therefore, we mean a middle state, in which souls are cleansed and purified from their smaller sins, and from those stains which disqualify them from enjoying the clear sight and possession of God; a state in which the debts that are due to the divine justice are fully discharged, that souls placed in such a situation may be prepared for heaven. That such a state really does exist, appears from the sacred oracles, from the uniform tradition of the church of Christ, and from the strongest arguments drawn from reason.

That the catechist and his friends may rest

¹ Sess. 25.

satisfied—that besides heaven and hell, so often mentioned in the sacred oracles, there is also a third place referred to—I will ask him to explain to me the well-known passage in St. Peter's first epistle, where it is asserted of our Redeemer, that after suffering for our sins, *the just for the unjust, he went and preached unto the spirits in prison*¹. This, he will undoubtedly say, is the celebrated *limbus patrum*, so often mentioned in the ancient ecclesiastical writers and preserved by the tradition of the church, where the souls of the ancient patriarchs and other just were confined, until they were cheered by the presence of their great Redeemer. This is perfectly just; no other solution of the difficulty can possibly be given; and this is what the catechist openly professes in the apostles' creed, when he says of Christ, that He *descended into hell*. It appears, then, that a middle state of souls, perfectly distinct from heaven or hell, in the usual acceptation of the word, is clearly expressed in the Scripture, and as clearly contained in the creed, which the catechist, as a good Christian, frequently and devoutly recites on his knees. Such a state, therefore, is by no means an ingenious fiction, an unmeaning fable, an artful invention of the papists, for the basest and most ignoble purposes; but it is founded on real fact, recorded in Scrip-

¹ 1 Peter, iii. 18, 19.

ture, and transmitted by the apostles to successive ages.

We have thus advanced some way in this discussion, by removing obstructions, and discountenancing that vulgar and illiterate prejudice, which exists in ordinary minds against a middle state. It is hence apparent that the catechist and his friends bear some resemblance to Moliere's rustic gentleman, who had been talking prose all his life without knowing what was meant by the term ; and these good souls, God help them ! have been in the habit of admiring St. Peter's epistle, and of reciting the creed, without considering that the doctrine of a middle state is there clearly expressed.

Let us now advance a step farther, by asking, if the providence of God could detain the ancient just in a state remote from his sacred presence, till a Redeemer came to liberate them, is there not a similar reason for withholding the joys of heaven for a time from those, who depart life, unincumbered indeed with the weight of any grievous crime, but covered with a variety of stains, which, without degrading the soul to the situation of a reprobate, tarnish its beauty and splendour, and render it unworthy of enjoying its Maker ? In plain language, let me ask what is to become of those who, at their departure hence, are too good for hell, and are not prepared for heaven ?

In this momentous question, the justice of God, that grand and peculiar attribute of the Deity, is deeply involved. It is repeated in various parts of the sacred oracles, that God *will render to every one according to his works*; and indeed this notion is dictated by the first principles of reason and religion. This clearly implies, that there exists a diversity of merit which God will treat with unerring justice; and on examining the state of those who are removed from the present stage of existence, we may safely rank three separate classes of persons. The first class consists of those who have preserved their baptismal innocence inviolate, as infants and others who, by a constant and unremitted co-operation with divine grace, have on all occasions persevered in the friendship of God; as also of those who have sealed the faith with their blood, or of the martyrs of penance, who have atoned for their misdeeds. The second class contains those who live with little regard for God and eternity; who freely indulge in the gratification of their passions, and who make no preparation for a future life. Of the professed unbeliever, and of him who trades in iniquity, I say nothing. The third class comprises such as have true *faith, working by charity in Jesus Christ*; it includes those who love God and make a provision for eternity, but who are habitually guilty of a variety of venial offences; whose souls exhibit

an infinite number of stains, which disqualify them for the society of the angels ; and who, in very many instances, may be conceived to depart life in this state. Now what is to become of such as leave this world in this situation ; of those, for instance, who are hurried out of life by sudden death, without having time to call for mercy ? Will the God of all sanctity, who cannot endure iniquity, admit such persons instantly to his eternal kingdom, and place them with the first class of the faithful here described ? That is utterly impossible, for we learn, that nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of heaven¹. Will the God of all justice discard them from his presence for ever, and place them with the sinner and unbeliever ? That is incompatible with the justice of him who will *render to every man according to his works*. What then remains to be done with respect to these good though imperfect individuals, but to confine them to the prison of purgatory, till their stains are washed away, and they are prepared for a purer abode ? Of this confinement our Redeemer appears to speak, when he says², *Verily I say to thee, thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the last farthing*. St. Jerom, the great expounder of the sacred oracles, understands the passage in this sense. His words deserve to be cited : “ The meaning

¹ Rev. xxi 27.

² Matt. v. 26.

is, thou shalt not go out of prison till thou hast atoned for thy smaller sins."—"Hoc est, quod dicit, non egredieris de carcere, donec etiam minuta peccata persolvas¹."

Our Redeemer, speaking of the sin against the Holy Ghost, makes a declaration which places the existence of a middle state, or a state of temporary purgation, beyond the smallest doubt. For he says of this enormous crime, that it *shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come*². From these words we justly and inevitably infer, that some sins are forgiven in the next world; for it is clearly impossible that the eternal wisdom of the Father should have uttered any unmeaning declaration, or have added a significant clause to a sentence, without designing to convey any notion whatever. Hence St. Augustine justly remarks on this passage: "It could not be asserted with truth, that some sins would not be pardoned neither in this world nor in the world to come, unless there were some to which pardon *would be granted, if not in this world, at least in the world to come*³." Pardon of sin is therefore granted in the next life; but to whom?—to those confined to the prison of hell? Out of hell there can be no redemption. To those who are before the throne of God? that is surely unnecessary. The pardon bestowed

¹ St. Hier. ad 5 Matt. sup. hunc loc.

² Matt. x.i. 32.

³ St. Aug. de Civitat. Dei. lib. xxi. 24.

in another world can therefore reach those souls only, whose smaller stains, sins and imperfections, are to be obliterated, and whose debts are to be cancelled, before they can be admitted to the pure sight and possession of God.

But that not a shadow of doubt may remain on the mind of the reader, on the subject of purgatory, I beg him to direct his attention to the practice of praying for the dead, which, at every period of time, has prevailed in the church. If the dead are to be prayed for, they must be in a situation in which benefit can be extended to them, and that cannot be in heaven, where such a resource would be unnecessary; nor can it be in hell, where it would be of no avail. The direct, the inevitable, and the only consequence of this practice, therefore, is, that a place of purgation, or a middle state, called purgatory, was always admitted, in which the souls of those confined in that prison could derive assistance from the suffrages of their surviving friends.

If the catechist doubts, for one moment, of the existence of this practice of praying for the dead, he, on examination, will be overpowered with authorities of every description, which ascertain the custom. The fact of Judas Maccabeus ordering prayers for the dead, and the marked commendation bestowed on the practice, stand on record¹. If it be objected, that this

¹ 2 Maccab. xii. 43 et seq.

work is not genuine Scripture, the reply is obvious, that the Catholic church throughout the world regards it as such ; and that no Protestant can deem it otherwise than a grave and authentic portion of history, where the facts related are to be received with implicit credit. Let the reader hear what St. Augustine says on this subject¹ : “ In the books of the Maccabees, we read that sacrifice was offered for the dead ; but if no traces were found in the ancient Scriptures, the practice of the universal church ought to possess no inconsiderable weight on the subject ; where, among the prayers of the priest, which are poured forth to the Lord God at his altar, *the recommendation of the dead holds a place.*” The authority of the great St. Augustine, on the prevalence of any practice in the church, ought to be deemed decisive by any rational inquirer². St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, who flourished in the bright period of Christianity, bears ample testimony to the same observance, and to the benefit derived from it by the faithful departed³. To adduce farther authorities would be an unnecessary attempt to prove what cannot be denied ; and what Protestant writers have ad-

¹ De Curâ pro Mort. c. 1.

² See also the same holy father, Serm. de verbis Apost. 172, olim 32.

³ Catec. Myst. v. p. 328, edit. Don Touttée.

mitted¹. If, therefore, prayers are offered for the dead, they must be in a situation to be benefited by the supplication; and that can neither be in heaven nor in hell; the practice, consequently, is an invincible proof of a middle state.—But it is now time to hear the catechist.

1. He says, that the Scripture mentions only heaven and hell, and takes no notice of purgatory. The answer to this is most simple and obvious. The Scriptures name not in express terms the Trinity, the consubstantiality of the Son, and many other essential points, which, however, in the estimation of the Protestant, are clearly proved from the sacred oracles. On the subject of purgatory, we are not contending for the name, but the substance of the thing; and this we deem sufficiently proved by the arguments adduced.

2. It is affirmed that we send to purgatory good men, of whom the apostle says, *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*². To this we simply observe, that the souls confined in purgatory are those of good men indeed, but imperfect, whose stains and venial offences disqualify them from seeing God till they are

¹ See Mr. Thorndike's *Just Weights and Measures*, c. xvi. p. 106; Lightfoot in *Erub.* xxix.; Forbes on Purgatory; Taylor on Prophecy, p. 345, besides innumerable others.

² Rom. viii. 1.

fully prepared. The text from St. Paul is nothing to the purpose ; for it merely declares, that there is no ground of condemnation for such as feel what he calls the law of the members, provided they withhold their consent from the motions of concupiscence, and walk not according to the flesh¹.

3. Good men are said to *rest from their labours*²; and how can this be compatible with a place of torment? The answer is perfectly clear, that this description regards those persons there mentioned, who are perfect, and have nothing to atone for³; but that it cannot be applied to a countless multitude of Christians, who die *in an imperfect state*, though they may have preserved their faith, and may, at the hour of their departure, have had the fear and love of God before their eyes. These stains must be blotted out, before such souls can enjoy the God of all purity.

4. Then it is said, that the doctrine of purgatory is injurious to the merits of Christ, who has fully satisfied for us. That the merits of Christ are infinite, and that our Redeemer has fully paid our ransom, no doubt can be entertained. But this does not exempt us from doing what is necessary on our part, from bearing a resemblance to our crucified Lord, *from taking*

¹ See the context, Rom. vii. 14—25. viii. 1—6.

² Rev. xiv. 1.

³ See the context, Rev. xiv. 1—13.

up our cross, and following him : and where our deficiencies are real, we must be answerable for the omission. The satisfaction of Christ does not remove this obligation ; and St. Paul felt its force, when he said : *I now rejoice in my sufferings, AND FILL UP THAT WHICH IS BEHIND IN THE AFFLICTIONS OF CHRIST in my flesh*¹. Catechist ! let me solemnly ask, did St. Paul insult our Redeemer by this declaration, or did he not energetically express the grave obligation under which we labour of copying his example, notwithstanding the infinite merit of his satisfaction ?

V. It is said, that it is not rational that venial sins, not destroying the state of grace, should be punished with inexpressible torments, while God forgives greater sins, with the punishment due to them. In answer to this, it must be said, that the case is not fairly stated ; but that there is nothing irrational or absurd in asserting, that a soul may be free from the guilt of greater crimes, and yet may be in the habitual commission of minor offences ; and if death should overtake her in that state, how is she to be disposed of ? She cannot immediately ascend to heaven, where nothing defiled enters. To hell she cannot be supposed to descend, for such a soul still enjoys the friendship of God. The middle state must therefore be her lot, till she is prepared for a

¹ Coloss. i. 24.

better place. The catechist has really my warmest and most friendly wishes; and I beg leave to repeat to him, what a venerable and witty clergyman once said to his opponent on the same subject: *I hope you may not go farther, and fare worse.*

VI. It is said, that the doctrine is a novelty, and was not an article of faith, till the Council of Trent. In plain language, all this is notoriously *untrue*. The authorities already produced are opposed to this statement; and the fable relating to the novel decision of the Council of Trent, is contradicted by the decree made in the Council of Florence¹.

VII. The seventh number contains a tissue of base calumnies, which merit no reply.

VIII. The eighth number is no less replete with falsehoods, which are contradicted by the authorities already produced, and by others, to which I solicit the attention of the reader. It is clear to a demonstration, that both the Greek and Latin churches admitted the purifying fires of purgatory. It would be no difficult task to fill a volume with testimonies on this article; but to spare the patience of the reader, I shall select very brief, but very decisive evidence from some of the Greek and Latin fathers, who flourished within the *pure and bright era of Christianity*. St. Gregory of Nyssa, who adorned the fourth age by his piety,

¹ See Carranza, fol. 351.

learning, and eloquence, writes in these terms on this subject:—"A Christian is either purified in this life by prayer, and an application to true wisdom; or after his death, by the furnace of a purifying fire¹." Many other passages of the same import are found in the progress of the same discourse. To the same effect, the great St. Augustine, speaking of infants who die after baptism, says, "that so far from feeling eternal pains, they do not suffer any purgative torments." (*Purgatoria tormenta*².) In the same work³, speaking of those who die under the guilt of minor transgressions, he asserts, that "at the period of the general resurrection, some will find mercy, and will not be consigned to eternal torments, *after the penalties, which the spirits of the dead, are actually suffering.*" Can a man, possessed of the smallest share of candour, affirm, in the face of these decisive testimonies, that the primitive church did not admit the fire of purgatory? Let the catechist give the answer.

9. Again his appeal to the Greek church is unsuccessful. The testimony of St. Gregory of Nyssa is decisive as to the belief of the ancient Greek church. The declaration of the Greeks in the Council of Florence, demonstrates their religious sentiments after the schism; and the manner in which the question was settled, implies

¹ St. Greg. Nyssen. Orat. pro Mort.: *vide hunc loc.* ap. Bellarm. de Purgat, lib. i. c. 6.

² St. Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. xxi. c. 16.

³ Lib. xxi. 24.

that no real difficulty existed¹. The sentiments of the more modern Greeks may be collected from the learned work before referred to². I cannot however resist the temptation of going farther than a mere reference, and of transcribing a most forcible testimony, from the attestation of the patriarch of the Cops³, whose jurisdiction extends to Egypt, to Ethiopia, to Nubia, and to the principal part of the continent of Africa. His words on this point are⁴, “we acknowledge, that when we die, and are then under the guilt of certain transgressions, *we are conveyed to purgatory: from which we are delivered by the prayers and masses said both before and after death, and the particular supplications for the dead, which have been at all times used.*” After this, let the catechist talk of *novelty* just as much as he pleases, but to those only, whose ignorance, or whose patience, can endure the recital.

10. In this number a clear acknowledgment is made, that the primitive Church prayed for the dead; but then it is added, that they prayed not for those in the state of suffering. This additional clause is opposed to the testimony of St. Augustine, before referred to, but which I shall now transcribe at length in his own language.

“*Orationibus vero sanctæ ecclesiæ, et sacrificio*

¹ See Baron. ad Ann. 1439, tom. vii. p. 864, et seq.

² See Perpét. de la Foi, tom. iii. liv. 8, pp. 410—587.

³ Ibid. pp. 553—555.

⁴ Ibid. vers. fin.

salutari, et eleemosynis, quæ pro eorum spiritibus erogantur, non est dubitandum mortuos adjuvari, ut cum eis misericordius agatur a Domino, quam eorum peccata meruerunt. Hoc enim a patribus traditum universa observat Ecclesia, ut pro eis, qui in corporis et sanguinis Christi communionem defuncti sunt, cum ad ipsum sacrificium loco suo commemoratur, oretur, ac pro illis quoque id offerri commemoretur¹." This passage, which I beg to recommend to the most serious attention of the English reader, for whose benefit I subjoin a translation, will prove, what degree of credit is due to the statements of the catechist. "*It cannot be made a subject of doubt, that the dead are benefited by the prayers of the holy church, and by the salutary sacrifice, and the alms, which are bestowed for the repose of their souls; and that in consequence, they are treated by the Lord with more mercy than their sins have deserved. This custom, which is derived from our fathers, is observed by the universal church, of praying in the commemorative part of the sacrifice, for those who have departed in the communion of the body and blood of Christ, and of testifying that the offering is also made in their behalf.*" After this noble testimony of the great St. Augustine, who, it must be remembered, died in the year 430, in the seventy-sixth

¹ St. Aug. Serm. de verb. Apost. ol. 39, edit. vero Ben. 172.

year of his age, and the fortieth of his sacred
ministry, the charge of novelty, and of a deviation
from the practice of the Primitive Church
will probably be abandoned for ever.

QUESTION XII.

Why do not you invoke and worship, or pray to the Virgin Mary, and the saints departed ?

ANSWER.

1. Because the word of God is directly against it ; for it saith, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, Matt. iv. 10.
2. It is absurd and irrational to worship men and women, who are not present to receive our worship ; or to speak to beings, when we neither are nor can be sure that they hear us.
3. Prayer is a spiritual sacrifice, and therefore must be offered to God only. External sacrifice, offered to creatures, by the confession of the Papists themselves, would be idolatry, and therefore much more a spiritual sacrifice, as it is much nobler, and of greater consequence than the other.
4. This invocation of saints is an innovation, for there is no example of it for the first three hundred years after Christ.
5. We are expressly commanded to come directly to God in prayer through our only mediator Jesus Christ, Psalm i. 15, 1 Tim. ii. 5, and to invoke saints departed to intercede for us, is to disobey his command.
6. It is a great dishonour to God, to beg that of saints which God only can give ; for this is to ascribe to them divine power : such is their prayer in the office of the blessed Virgin Mary : " Mother of mercy, protect us from the enemy, and receive us in the hour of death."
7. The excuse they make that they pray only to saints to pray for them ; even this is injurious to the mediation of Jesus Christ ; for this is to make innumerable mediators, and tacitly to accuse his mediation of imperfection, who is our only mediator, not only of redemption, but of intercession too.

8. This invocation of saints departed, is injurious to the saints themselves, who, were they to appear here, would disdain to receive that honour which is due to God only.
9. Their praying to saints departed, is not the same with our desiring our neighbours here on earth to pray for us ; for we know our neighbours hear us ; nor is it any more than a friendly request.

Here are no formal prayers offered to our neighbours in a devotional way ; besides, for this we have a command, but none for the other.

OBSERVATIONS.

BEFORE we proceed to the discussion of the matter presented to us in the answer to the twelfth question, it becomes peculiarly necessary to define with precision, the nature and extent of the Catholic doctrine on the subject of the invocation of the saints. For the catechist, in common with his brethren, betrays a lust to misapply and to misconstrue, in order to ensure condemnation ; and to involve the question in mists and darkness, that the real merits of the case may not distinctly appear. Knowing that the veneration paid to the saints is sometimes called worship, *cultus sanctorum*, he chooses to understand the term in the primary sense, as implying supreme adoration, and instantly pronounces the practice of the Catholic church to be contrary to the word of God, or in plain language, to be manifest idolatry. If this gentle writer had consulted Dr. Johnson's Dictionary, he would have discovered, that the term worship, not only implies supreme

adoration, but honour, reverence, and respect ; and if he had deigned to inspect any authorized document on the subject, he would have seen with the utmost certainty, that in the latter sense only, the Catholic church pays respect and veneration to the departed saints. What says the Doway Catechism, the book by which Catholic children are taught the first elements of religion, in answer to the question, how the saints and angels are to be honoured¹? **WITH AN INFERIOR HONOUR, AS THE FRIENDS AND CREATURES OF GOD, NOT AS GODS, NOR WITH GOD'S HONOUR.** What is the language of the Council of Trent on the subject? Listen, catechist, to the simple and modest exposition of Catholic belief, when it is affirmed², **THAT THE SAINTS REIGNING WITH CHRIST, OFFER UP PRAYERS FOR MEN, THAT IT IS GOOD AND USEFUL SUPPLIANTLY TO INVOKE THEM, AND TO RECUR TO THEIR PRAYERS AND ASSISTANCE, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN BENEFITS FROM GOD, THROUGH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, WHO ALONE IS OUR REDEEMER AND MEDIATOR.** Here let me exclaim, with the feelings of a man who is indignant at the obloquy thrown upon the whole Church of Christ, how simple, how clear, how pious, is this exposition of Catholic doctrine! But how dark, how disinge-

¹ First Commandment, viii.

² Sess. 25.

nuous, how malignant, is the misrepresentation of our enemies !

From this succinct statement, it appears that Catholics believe that the saints in heaven pray for the faithful on earth ; and that it is lawful and profitable to ask their intercession ; and unless I produce such evidence in favour of this practice, as will satisfy the pious Christian and the impartial man, I consent to forfeit my existence.

I first request the catechist to turn to his creed, which, it is presumed, he recites at least once a-day ; there he professes to believe *the communion of saints*. What possible meaning can be affixed to this portion of that venerable and traditional document of Christian antiquity, but that there is a union of feeling, interest, and charity, a holy fellowship between the saints in heaven and the faithful on earth ; that the former interest themselves in our welfare, and that we solicit their intercession, and their charitable succour, before the throne of God. This is the interpretation universally given by Catholics to this clause. But what will the catechist say, when he finds that Protestants themselves conceive it to be the natural and obvious meaning of the words. Hear Mr. Thorndike¹ : “ All the members of the church tri-

¹ Just Weights and Measures, c. xvi. p. 107.

umphant in heaven, according to their degree of favour with God, abound also with love to his church militant on earth; and though they know not the necessities of particular persons, *without the revelation of God*, yet they know there are such necessities, so long as the church is militant on earth. *Therefore it is certain*, both that they offer continual prayers to God for those necessities; and that their prayers must needs be of great force and effect with God, for the assistance of the church militant in this warfare. Which, if it be true, the communion of saints will necessarily require, that all who remain solicitous of their trial, be assisted by the prayers of the living for present comfort and future rest. *That the living beg of God a part and interest in the benefit of those prayers, which they who are so near to God in his kingdom, tender him without ceasing for the church on earth.*" Such is the testimony of this eminent and impartial scholar on this subject.

But the Protestant will probably exclaim, give us some clear proof from Scripture, which will justify us in believing, that the saints in heaven pray for the faithful on earth, and that it is profitable to invoke their aid. Let the catechist inspect his Bible¹, and he will find *the angel of the Lord praying for Jerusalem and the cities of*

¹ Zechariah, i. 12.

Judah ; let him turn to the account of the patriarch Jacob at the end of life, and he will observe him entreating the angel of the Lord *to bless the lads*¹; let him farther consider the injunction of God Almighty himself, conveyed in express terms to the friends of Job, who had displeased his divine majesty by their rash and irreligious discourse. What is the remedy prescribed? Why, that they are to repair to Job, to offer a burnt offering, and, it is added “ *my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly*².” Here we have an instance, in which God refuses any reconciliation but that which is obtained by the prayer of the just man, and where peremptory orders are given to solicit his interposition. Let all this be attentively considered, and the catechist will feel no possible difficulty, in asking the saints to pray for his wants, especially as their interest in heaven is greater than that of the most distinguished individuals on earth, and their charity for the church militant remains unabated.

Throughout the history of the people of God, we find innumerable favours granted at the request of Moses, of Samuel, of Elias, and of other just men ; and will it be deemed singular, if God should bestow his graces, and dispense his benefits, in consequence of entreaties, preferred

¹ Gen. xlviii. 16.

² Job xlii. 8.

by his chosen servants reigning with him in glory? Most assuredly the catechist will be perfectly reconciled to the practice of invoking the saints as friends of God, when he reflects, what his own practice is with respect to the holy angels. For in the Collect for the festival of St. Michael and the holy angels¹, he fervently says to God: *Mercifully grant that as thy holy angels always do thee service in heaven, so by appointment they may succour and defend us on earth.*

St. Paul, in his various epistles, is continually soliciting the prayers of the faithful; and is it less honourable to God, to ask for the powerful interest of the saints who are reigning with him in heaven! Where is the difference, as to the principle on which the practice is founded? Unless this devotion to the saints were perfectly agreeable to God, we should not have been encouraged to resort to it by the instances here produced: nor would the prayers of the saints have been represented in that marked manner in the New Testament. In the great prophetic work of St. John are these words²: *Grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits, which are before the throne.* Again³, the four and twenty elders are represented fall-

¹ See the Book of Common Prayer.

² Rev. i. 4.

³ Ibid. v. 8.

ing down, with *golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints*. And afterwards¹, the *prayers of all the saints* are offered up, and the smoke of the incense *with the prayers of the saints*, ascend before God. To what purpose is all this introduced, but to describe the charity of the saints, and the advantages of obtaining their powerful aid?

Hence, in every age of the church, the practice of honouring and invoking the saints has unceasingly prevailed. Of the piety of Christians in the first century, in this particular, St. Dionysius is an ample voucher, who, in his great work, clearly refers to it². St. Irenæus, the ornament of the second age, introduces, in his celebrated performance, a comparison between Eve and Mary; the first was seduced and avoided God, the second was obedient and became *an advocate*³. Similar language is repeatedly used by the holy fathers and eminent writers of every age; and so decisive is their testimony on the subject, that Dr. Montague, a Protestant bishop of Norwich, makes this candid acknowledgment: “I grant Christ is not wronged in his mediation; it is no impiety to say as they⁴ do, ‘Holy Mary pray for me—holy Peter pray for me!’” and again, “I see no absurdity in nature—no incongruity unto analogy of faith—no repug-

¹ Rev. viii. 3, 4.

² Eccles. Hierch. vii.

³ Lib. v. contra Hæres. cir. med. ⁴ The Catholics.

nance at all to Scripture, much less impiety for any man to say, *Holy angel guardian, pray for me!*¹” Such is the language of this venerable Protestant divine, who, in the same work, acknowledges this to have been the practice of the earliest and most venerable period of the church².

But the catechist and his friends seem peculiarly displeased at the honour and veneration shown by the holy Catholic church to the ever Blessed Virgin Mary. I am literally ashamed to witness this feeling in persons calling themselves Christians; for it betrays the most gross ignorance of the principles of religion, or else it discovers an invincible proof of the most deplorable impiety. To attain correct ideas on this part of the subject, let the catechist know, that whatever honours, prerogatives, and privileges this blessed and favoured Virgin received from God, she, no less than the other friends of heaven, is honoured as a pure creature; and that all the veneration shown her by the Catholic church, arises from the sublime dignity, with which she was invested by God, and the extraordinary virtue with which she was adorned. Of the transcendant dignity of the Blessed Virgin, and of her unparalleled merit, the catechist, as a Christian, ought not to be ignorant. Is it not predicted of our Redeemer³, that he was to be

¹ *Invoc. of Saints*, p. 118.

² *Ibid.* pp. 97—103.

³ *Isaiah*, vii. 14.

born of a virgin? Is it not said of him in the Apostles' creed, that he was born of the Virgin Mary? Is she not, therefore, mother of God, and the Virgin by excellence? When it pleased Almighty God to carry into effect the sublime prediction of his prophet, was not a distinguished embassy sent from heaven, to this most favoured Virgin, to reveal the particulars of this most unprecedented, and, to us, most interesting event¹? Turn to this passage, catechist, and read with attention what you and your friends appear always disposed to pass over in sullen silence. You there see that she is treated by the angel with the greatest possible distinction—that she is styled, full of grace, or as you think proper to translate the Greek term *κεχαριτωμένη*, highly favoured: it is stated that the Lord is with her—that she is blessed among women—that she has found grace before God, and that she was to conceive and bring forth the Saviour of the world. St. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost, gives her the appellation of mother of her Lord², recounting, at the same time, her distinguished elevation. The holy Virgin, in a canticle, which has never been surpassed, ascribes the whole event to the power, mercy, and goodness of God, agreeably to the promises made to the seed of Abraham. Here, let me ask, can any one read

¹ St. Luke i. 26, et seq.

² Ibid. 43.

this detail, contained in the holy Scripture, without being impressed with the sublime elevation of Mary, and her most pure and transcendent virtue? and if, beyond all doubt, *those are to be honoured whom God honours*, the Catholic church performs but a sacred duty, by showing honour, respect, and veneration, to this most sacred Virgin. Hence the celebrated Dr. Pearson, a Protestant divine, in his Exposition of the Creed, says, with the utmost candour¹: “*that we cannot bear too reverend a regard for the mother of our Lord, so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the Lord himself.*” As to the notion of giving to this distinguished Virgin, any portion of divine worship, such an idea never entered the contemplation of the Catholic church. The sole purpose and object of this devotion to Mary, is to honour her prerogatives and virtues, which were the effects of divine grace, and to invoke her powerful aid and intercession. Hence the great Athanasius, the champion of orthodoxy against the Arians, in the beginning of the fourth century, used to exclaim: “*Intercede for us, O mistress, lady, queen, and mother of God*²!”

But no holy father has left so distinguished a proof of a constant and unremitted devotion to the ever Blessed Virgin Mary as the great St.

¹ P. 179.

² St. Athana. Serm. de Annunt. vers. fin.

Augustine ; in confirmation of which fact may be cited his celebrated sermon on the annunciation¹—a short extract will suffice. “ *Behold,*” says he, “ *from this all generations shall call me blessed.* O, Blessed Mary ! who can make to you a due return of thanks and praise, who, by your singular consent, have succoured a lost world ?” And again² : “ Vouchsafe to listen to our prayers, and *procure*, in return, our happy reconciliation.” And towards the end of the same discourse : “ Holy Mary ! succour the miserable, support the faint-hearted, cheer the afflicted, pray for the people, interpose in favour of the clergy, intercede for the devout female sex. Let all who celebrate your sacred festival feel the effects of your aid.” After this clear and decisive testimony of St. Augustine, which admits of no reply, will the catechist dispute either the antiquity or the propriety of this devotion ? Will he continue to ring the changes on novelty, innovation, idolatry, injury done to the mediation of Christ, and other delightful sounds ? But let us give an impartial hearing to this lame theologian, and try to remove his scruples.

I. He says, that this doctrine is contrary to the Scripture, which directs us to worship God alone.

¹ See Serm. de Sanctis, 18. Super. Evang. Missus est, p. 373 et 374, tom. x. edit. Paris.

² Ibid.

From the explanation already given, he will clearly see, that the Catholic church never intends to pay divine honour and divine worship but to God alone : but this grand and paramount duty by no means prevents us from showing an inferior and relative veneration and respect to the friends of God as such—from honouring those whom God honours, and from soliciting their aid and interest. Does the catechist offend his sovereign by soliciting the interposition of a friend at court, in order to obtain a favour in the gift of the crown, instead of rushing into the presence chamber? and did not God profess himself ready to grant that, at the request of the just man, which he would otherwise have refused¹?

2. Next, it is said to be irrational to pray to those who are not present to hear, and when we have no certainty that they do hear us. When I read this, and similar objections, I shrewdly suspect that the catechist never made a serious study of the sacred Scripture, which, however, he professes to consider the sole rule of faith. Has he never heard of the joy in heaven upon one sinner doing penance, more than upon ninety-nine just². Joy and exultation on any event necessarily imply a knowledge of it: the blessed spirits, therefore, know what passes in this

¹ Vide Job, loc. cit.

² Luke, xv. 7. 10.

world, and highly interest themselves in our concerns. Perhaps the catechist wishes to know *how* the saints in heaven can be possessed of this knowledge, which fills them with that holy joy, to which St. Luke alludes in the passage referred to. To this idle, irreligious, though common objection, produced against the invocation of the saints, I beg leave seriously and indignantly to reply, that we are not to call God to an account, as to the manner in which he chooses to communicate to his chosen servants about his heavenly throne, such knowledge as fills them with ecstatic joy. If, however, the hints which our heavenly Father has deigned to impart, be found satisfactory, as they ought to be, let this writer again turn to his Scripture, in which he appears wretchedly deficient, and read in the royal prophet, speaking of the joys of heaven, this sublime passage: *With thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light*¹. Again, let him consult St. Paul, who says: *now we see as through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known*². It appears from these passages, that the saints in heaven see in the light of God whatever he chooses to communicate; and that our knowledge of things, in our present

¹ Ps. xxxv. Hebr. 36.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

state of existence, is ignorance and darkness, when compared to that light and science which illuminate the blessed spirits.

III. The next objection is peculiar indeed; when it is stated that prayer is a sacrifice, and, when offered to creatures, becomes idolatry. To solve this scruple of the pious catechist, we have to state, that the prayers addressed to the saints are precisely of the same nature and description as the entreaties we make to a fellow creature to pray for us: we consider these holy and blessed souls as fellow creatures, but as having greater merit and influence before the throne of God than ourselves; and we hasten to avail ourselves of their interposition. If this be deemed an act of idolatry, St. Paul was a notorious idolater, when he solicited the Romans in these words: *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, that you help me in your prayers for me to God*¹.

IV. That the invocation of the saints is an innovation, and that there is no example of it for the first three hundred years after Christ, are assertions utterly *untrue*, as the reader may have clearly seen. In addition to what has been stated and proved, the practice of the invocation

¹ Rom. xv. 30.

of the saints is clearly referred to and authorised by St. Cyprian, who suffered for the faith in the year 258¹.

V. Then it is said that we disobey the command of God, by not making Jesus Christ our sole mediator: according to the apostle², our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is truly our mediator, *who gave himself a ransom for all*: this the Catholic Church ever readily and cheerfully acknowledges. But though our Redeemer is most assuredly our mediator of redemption, and even of intercession too, in the primary and fullest sense of the word, this by no means excludes the interposition of his chosen friends, who charitably petition the throne of grace in our behalf. Let me again observe, that the catechist does not dishonour his sovereign by employing superior interest to procure a royal gift; nor do the faithful injure the mediation of our Redeemer by applying to the powerful aid and intercession of the saints. To this general intercourse between the saints in heaven and the faithful on earth, to this *communion of saints*, St. Cyprian clearly alludes, when he represents the blessed above *secure of their own immortality, and solicitous for ours*³. But that the reader may have

¹ Vide Epist. ad Corn. Pap. lx. 271. edit. Oxon. Epist. lvii. 77—79. edit. Pamel. et not. doct. edit.

² 1 Tim. ii. 5.

³ St. Cypr. de Mortal. versus finem.

still more direct evidence of the practice of the first ages on the subject of the invocation of the saints, let him recollect what is recorded by Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, and author of many learned works now extant. That most learned writer relates, that it was the usual custom in his days, to *honour the martyrs as the friends of God*, to approach to their tombs, and to *pour forth supplications to them as to holy men, by whose intercession before God no small advantage was attained*¹. A writer who, in defiance of this testimony, should hereafter venture to call this holy practice an innovation, would deserve to be treated as a wanton calumniator, and never to possess the smallest share of credit in the literary world.

- VI. Still the catechist urges, that we ascribe divine power to the saints, by asking of them what God alone can give. In answer to this, let me again and again observe, that we apply to the saints, not as to the *authors and distributors of grace*, but as *intercessors only*, whom we request to espouse our cause before the throne of God. All our prayers, however worded, are to be understood with this limitation. Thus we petition the Blessed Virgin Mary to protect us by her intercession, and so to befriend us by her aid,

¹ Vide Prepar. Evangel. lib. xiii. 7.

that we may be favourably received at the hour of our death.

VII. The catechist is not yet satisfied—his piety leads him to apprehend that we charge our great Mediator with imperfection, by applying to the saints. Let me assure him that we do no such thing; we do not recur to the intercession of the saints, from any supposed defect in the mediation of our Redeemer, but from a consciousness of our own defects, imperfections, and miseries; and on this ground we apply to them for their succour, in the same spirit in which the friends of Job were directed by God himself, to seek the interposition of the just man.

VIII. The catechist, in his simplicity, imagines that the saints departed would disavow the honour shown them, could they be suffered to appear on earth. He may quiet his apprehensions on this ground, by remembering that the saints are represented in the book of the Revelations of St. John, as doing the good office which we request them to perform¹.

IX. When he says, that it is not the same thing to pray to the saints departed, and to desire a neighbour to pray for us, I beg leave to observe, that these are actions resting on the same foundation, and supported by the same principles. When we request the aid of another's prayer, we

¹ See Rev, loc. cit.

desire him to perform an act of charity in our favour ; and when we recur to the intercession of the saints, we make the same request, though with more effect, as their interest is greater before God, and their charity more animated and inflamed.

QUESTION XIII.

Why do not you worship or venerate the relics of saints?

ANSWER.

1. Because, if I am not to give religious honour to saints departed, I must give none to relics.
2. There is no command nor example in Scripture for this practice.
3. It is a novelty, for this trade of relics was not known or heard of till very near four hundred years after Christ.
4. We read indeed that devout men carried St. Stephen to his burial, but there was no stir made with his relics.
5. Some of the wiser sort of Papists confess themselves that there are great cheats in relics, and that bones of thieves and murderers are sometimes honoured and adored for relics of saints.
6. The miracles pretended to be wrought by these relics, have been found often to be nothing but delusions of the devil.
7. By this superstitious veneration of relics, men's minds are diverted and turned away from that rational and spiritual worship the gospel requires.
8. It is evident, from experience, that the people in the Church of Rome put great trust and confidence in their relics, and abuse them into superstition.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE same principles which direct the Catholic Church in showing honour to the saints, are equally applicable to the veneration paid to their relics. All divine worship, denominated by divines *cultus latræ*, is studiously and scru-

pulously to be reserved for God alone: the veneration manifested to the relics of the saints and martyrs, is of an inferior description, and designed as a memorial of honour towards the servants and peculiar friends of our God and Redeemer. Their bodies which, agreeably to the doctrine of the apostle¹, were temples of God, and a place of abode for his divine Spirit, are on that account entitled to the veneration of the faithful. Every mark of respect, therefore, thus shown to the relics of the saints, in fact originates in the gratitude which is felt towards Him, who is the real source of every good gift, and from whom all grace and sanctity descend.

Of this veneration paid to inanimate objects, in consequence of the relation which they bore to God, or to individuals who have been highly favoured by God, the whole Scripture is literally full. Both the New and Old Testaments abound with the most distinguished instances of the kind of respect here explained, which God has sanctioned with the broad seal of his divine authority. To this effect may be produced the constant and invariable respect shown by the Israelites to the ark; the miraculous interpositions of Providence by the accident which befel Dagon²; the punishment of those who looked curiously into the ark, when fifty thousand perished³; the destruction of

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 16.

² 1 Sam. v. 4.

³ Ibid. vi. 19.

Uzzah, for his imprudent officiousness¹; the miraculous effects performed by the rod of Moses²; the supernatural operation achieved by means of the mantle of Elijah³; the restoration of a man from death to life, by applying the corpse to Elisha's bones⁴. If God thought proper to show such manifest indications of his divine power in the old law, in honour of inanimate objects, and to enforce respect to the bones and other relics of his departed prophets, what prevents the Catholic church from exhibiting proper tokens of honour to the relics of the saints in the new law, particularly as the practice is fully justified by what is recorded in various parts of the New Testament. What is more mean than the latchet of a shoe? yet St. John the Baptist professed himself unworthy to loosen that used by our Redeemer⁵. The devout woman in the Gospel had confidence, that even the act of touching the hem of our Saviour's garment would restore her to health; and we find this ardent faith honoured with the highest commendation⁶.

The next passages to which I must call the attention of the honest catechist, are from the Acts of the Apostles. In the first passage of this description, it is recorded that the fervent disciples of the primitive teachers brought forward their

¹ 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7.

² 2 (al. 4) Kings, ii. 14.

³ John, i. 27.

⁴ Exod. 7.

⁵ 2 Kings, xiii. 21.

⁶ Matt. ix. 22.

sick, that the shadow of Peter might relieve them; and that those persons, and others tormented with evil spirits, received the benefit of a cure¹. In the next passage it is related, by the same sacred historian, that the handkerchiefs and aprons, which had touched the body of St. Paul, removed diseases and expelled devils². Here let me ask the catechist and all his friends, in *convocation assembled*, as they dislike the name of a *general council*; if by any extraordinary combination of circumstances, any of these handkerchiefs or aprons, which had touched the body of St. Paul, had been preserved, amidst the general wreck of ancient monuments, and should be in their possession, with what eyes they would view such relics? Would they deem it superstitious to retain them with reverence, to treat them with honour and respect, because they had been applied to the body of St. Paul, and because God had honoured them with such signal marks of approbation? The answer is too obvious to be waited for: they treat the tokens of regard, left them by their friend, with affection and respect; and would their religious feelings be less awakened in the case here supposed? I am justified in saying, that their conduct would rival the practice of the Catholic church, in reverencing whatever belongs to God and to holy things; and that they would thus sanction the principle of

¹ Acts v. 15, 16.

² Ibid. xix. 12.

the question under discussion. Let us now proceed to solve the idle objections of our *theological* brother.

I. It is said, that if no religious honour is to be given to the saints departed, none is to be given to their relics. The way to furnish a complete answer to this difficulty, is to lay down the converse of the proposition, with its consequence. If the saints are entitled to a relative honour and religious veneration, and this has been amply proved in the preceding article, there is no reason for withholding due respect from their relics.

II. It is alleged, that there is no precept for honouring relics to be found in the Scripture, nor is there any example of such veneration. To this we reply, that there is no precept by which we are enjoined to move a hat, or to show any mark of external reverence to a fellow-creature who merits peculiar consideration. But yet this is fully justified by the general principle of giving honour to all to whom honour is due—a principle strongly enforced by St. Paul¹. In the same manner the Catholic considers himself as justified in honouring the friends of God, as such, and in testifying his respect for their venerated remains. If regard and consideration can be daily and hourly manifested for the

¹ Rom. xiii. 7.

remains of a departed friend, what principle of religion, piety, or common sense, prevents the Catholic from honouring the remains of those, whom God has honoured in a peculiar manner, in consequence of superior sanctity? As to the gross ignorance or wilful misrepresentation manifested in saying, that there is no example of this relative veneration due to relics, let those stigmatise this assertion, as it deserves, who have examined, in the passages before referred to, the unparalleled reverence both paid to the ark by the children of Israel, and occasionally enforced by awful visitations of an unusual nature. Let the reader attend to the history of Elijah's mantle, to the effect produced by Elisha's bones, or the sudden operations resulting from the aprons, which had been applied to the body of St. Paul.

III. It is asserted, that the practice of honouring relics is a novelty, because it was not known till near four hundred years after Christ. What an objection! what an admission! what blindness is here displayed, in using a weapon which can be turned against the assailant with so much facility! Here it is clearly admitted, that the practice of venerating relics, contumeliously called the trade of relics, has been known in the church for more than one thousand four hundred years—and yet this is termed a novelty! If this be deemed a novelty, what are we to think of the

whole system of Protestantism, which was not heard of in the world till more than one thousand five hundred years after Christ, and which, at this day, can boast only, under any of its forms, the duration of three centuries. But the assertion, that the veneration of relics was not known till near four hundred years after Christ, is *manifestly untrue*, and proves the catéchist to be as deficient in the knowledge of ecclesiastical antiquity, as he has shown himself, by the preceding objections, ignorant of the plainest facts recorded in Scripture.

In the year 166 of the Christian era, St. Polycarp, the illustrious bishop of Smyrna, suffered a glorious martyrdom for the name of Christ; a distinct account of which was published in a circular letter, addressed to the churches established in various parts of the Christian world, and particularly to the church of Philadelphia¹. Scaliger, speaking of this remarkable document, declares, that he knows nothing more truly affecting in the whole compass of Christian antiquity². In this celebrated performance, the authors say³: “ We adore him, (meaning Christ our Lord) as the Son of God; but as to the martyrs, we bear them a deserved affection, as the disciples and imitators of our Lord, in con-

¹ See Russel Patr. Apostol. tom. ii. 322—369.

² Animad. Euseb. No. 2183.

³ No. 17 et 18. p. 361, 362.

sequence of their unparalleled benevolence towards their King and their Master ; and may we become their associates and fellow disciples. The centurion, seeing a commotion arise among the Jews, placed the martyr in the midst of the fire, and consigned him to the flames. *Thus we afterwards took up his bones, more precious than the most precious stones, and more valued than gold, and deposited them in a proper place. On that spot shall we assemble, and by the bounty of the Lord, celebrate the birth-day of his martyrdom, both in remembrance of the departed combatant, as well for the instruction and trial of future ages.*" If this quotation, from the illustrious document under consideration, does not excite in the catechist some feeling of shame, we may safely pronounce that all delicacy is extinguished in his breast.

IV. The next objection, that there is no mention made in the Acts of the Apostles, of the manner in which the relics of St. Stephen were disposed of, is worthy of its author. This is barely a negative argument, and by no means destroys the force of the positive demonstration, drawn from the miracles, with which God honoured the shade of Peter, or the aprons that had touched the body of Paul. Though St. Luke is silent as to the precaution taken about the relics of St. Stephen, they were unquestionably honoured and preserved with care ; for at a subsequent period, they were

discovered ; and the gréat St. Augustine records many miracles performed by means of these relics, of some of which he was an ocular witness¹.

V. As to the assertion, that there have been false relics, that circumstance cannot destroy the value of those that are genuine. The church takes the most prudent precaution to guard against imposition² ; and this is all that can be required. If base money is circulated in the dominions of his Majesty, by artifice and knavery, that deplorable abuse does not impair the value of the legitimate coin.

VI. Again it is said, that the miracles attributed to these relics have often been found to be delusions of the devil. To this it may be safely replied, that they have often been found to be true ; and that no doubt can be entertained of the reality of those, which the pastors of the Catholic church, after a juridical examination, have admitted³. Again let it be observed, that if base coin has sometimes been circulated, or false cures credited in the history of medicine, those occurrences do not impair the value of good money, or diminish the credit of the successful physician.

VII. The superstition here charged on the

¹ See the *whole* of the long chapter on the subject, c. viii. lib. 22 de Civit. Dei.

² Conc. Trident. Sess. 25.

³ See St. Aug. loc. cit.

Catholic church, exists only in the imagination of the writer¹.

VIII. As to the abuse of the veneration paid to relics, it is evident that the abuses here referred to, are not committed by persons well informed of their duty, and if the ignorant and uninformed pervert it to improper purposes, that is no fairer argument for the suppression of the legitimate practice, than the excess of the drunkard would be for prohibiting the general use of wine, and other inebriating liquors.

¹ See the fair explanation in the body of the present article.

QUESTION XIV.

Why may not the images of God, of Christ, of the Virgin Mary, and of the saints, be venerated or worshipped?

ANSWER.

1. Because, as to images of God, God declares his anger against those that pretend to make any similitude of him, Deut. iv. 15, 16; Isa. xi. 18. And if it be not lawful to make them, it must be more unlawful to worship them.
2. This worship or veneration is peremptorily forbid in the second commandment, and under very severe penalties.
3. Even the worship of the true God by an image, is unlawful, and called idolatry, as is evident from the example of the Israelites worshipping the true God by the figure of the golden calf, 1 Cor. x. 7.
4. The Primitive Christians would not suffer images so much as to be painted on the walls of their churches, so far they were from thinking their worship lawful.
5. Several councils of old have condemned this worship.
6. The Carpocratians were counted heretics in the Primitive Church, for worshipping the images of Christ and St. Paul.
7. God doth not only forbid placing divine virtue in images, but falling down before them in a religious way; and whatever men's pretensions are, he interprets their falling down before them as worshipping the image itself, Jer. ii. 26, 27; Isa. xlv. 17.
8. The heathens excused their worshipping of images, with the same argument the Church of Rome makes use of, that they did not worship the image, but the person represented by the image, yet the Christians charged them with idolatry.
9. So great an aversion had the Primitive Christians to all such worship, that St. Epiphanius, bishop of Salamine, who lived in the fourth century, tore a vail in the church, on

which an image of Christ, or some saint, was painted, looking upon it as scandalous and dishonourable to religion.

10. Though the second Council of Nice established this image-worship, yet the Council of Francfort, that followed soon after, condemned those fathers for their superstition, and deflecting from the primitive rule.

OBSERVATIONS.

By applying the term worship to the veneration paid by the Catholic church to images, the catechist wishes to insinuate, that by this practice divine adoration is given to created objects. But this is wholly a misrepresentation of the state of the case, which is usually made by Protestant writers, and diametrically opposite to the authoritative decisions of the Catholic church. What is the language of the Council of Trent? Nothing can be more satisfactory and precise on the subject. That venerable synod teaches, "that the images of Christ, of his Virgin Mother, and of the other saints, are to be had and retained particularly in the churches; and that due honour and veneration are to be given to them; not that any divinity is supposed to reside in them, or any property, for which they should be worshipped; or that any thing is to be asked of them, or any confidence is to be placed in images, as was done by the Gentiles, who reposed their trust in their idols; but because the honour, which is paid to them, is referred to the objects which they represent; so that by the images which we kiss,

and before which we uncover our heads and bow down, we adore Christ; and venerate those saints, of whom they exhibit a likeness¹." Such is the explanation of the Council of Trent, which is amply sufficient to convey the Catholic doctrine on the subject, and to remove the coarse and vulgar objections produced by the catechist. Even children are so accurately instructed in this particular, that the answers furnished in the catechism, are calculated to fill our adversaries with that sense of shame, which misrepresentation and falsehood, clearly detected, ought, in every instance, to produce. In the Doway Catechism, (first commandment) in answer to the question, do Catholics pray to images? it is distinctly said: "No, by no means: we pray *before* them indeed, to keep us from distractions, 'but not *to* them; for we know, that they can neither see, hear, nor help us."

The purpose, which the Catholic church has in view, in proposing holy images to the veneration of the faithful, is so simple and obvious, that it would appear difficult to conceive, how any misrepresentation can take place. The catechist and his associates are invariably in the habit of preserving the pictures and images of their absent and departed friends; and the utmost respect is shown to these inanimate memo-

¹ Sess. 25.

rials, in proportion to the high estimation in which the objects represented, are held in the circle of their admirers. No offence is taken at this practice, by the most scrupulous delicacy and refinement of religious feeling: the man, who should charge the custom with blame, on the ground of superstitious veneration shown to inanimate objects, would be subjected to the imputation of folly; and he who should violate the respect due to these tokens of friendly remembrance, would be frowned out of all polished society.

If this veneration to the representations of friends, can be daily and hourly exhibited without offence, what prevents the Catholic church from showing to the images of Christ and his saints, that relative reverence so well explained by the Council of Trent, and so accurately delivered and expounded even to children? If the image of the king is to be honoured, on account of the relation it bears to the majesty of the sovereign, are we to dishonour, insult, or refuse to reverence the images of our Lord and Redeemer, of him by whom kings reign, and judges pronounce equitable decisions?

The utility of the practice of honouring images cannot assuredly be called in question. They exhibit the most moving representations of all that is affecting in religion; they may be justly styled the volume of the simple and un-

learned ; who may be unable to peruse a treatise, though they may understand a subject exhibited in a picture. They contribute to preserve the mind from distractions and roving imaginations during the time of prayer ; they become the occasion of pious and fervent desires ; and they unquestionably tend to promote a holy and laudable emulation to follow those examples, which are so affectingly exhibited.

Neither can the scrupulous Christian apprehend any divine prohibition of a practice, so explained and modified, and so embodied in the common transactions of mankind. On the contrary, a relative veneration to places which God has honoured, to things which bear a relation to him, and to sacred subjects, are held up to our regard in the sacred oracles, provided always that supreme adoration, *cultus latriæ*, be given to God alone. Moses is told in distinct terms¹, *the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*. The royal prophet, alluding to the veneration shown to the ark, exclaims : *adore his footstool ; for he is holy*². Over the ark of the covenant the cherubim are directed to be placed³ ; a brazen serpent is made by the divine command, to which the people were to direct their view, for the benefit of a cure⁴. Could all this be enjoined to a people notoriously prone to idolatry, and shall

¹ Exod. iii. 5.

² Psalm xcvi. 5, al. xcix.

³ Exod. xxv. 18 et seq.

⁴ Num. xxi. 8, 9.

no relative veneration either of places or any memorials be allowed in the Catholic Church, at a period when idolatry is unknown in the Christian world?

Indeed the good and conscientious Protestant, who carries about with him a sanctified horror of what he is pleased to term the worship of images, not only reveres and venerates the picture of his friend, which he kisses with affection; but on more solemn occasions he shows an ardent love and remembrance for the book of the Gospels; he bows to the name of Jesus; he even makes a reverence to the throne of his sovereign; and if called upon to give an explication of the act, he sensibly observes, that he honours the place, which is the seat of majesty. All this is extremely commendable; but on the same principle, he will allow the Catholic a similar privilege of honouring the memorials of Christ and his saints.

If the catechist wishes to know, what the general practice of the church has been on this subject, let him go back to the eighth century, when the second general Council of Nice was held, and then he will find the practice established in terms as clear as those employed by the Council of Trent¹. If, according to his usual

¹ See Summ. Concil. Gen. Nic. II. act. 7. Carranz. fol. 289.

mode, he is disposed to treat the practice of more than a thousand years standing as a novelty, though the boasted reform counts only three hundred, let him consult those who lived in the flourishing period of Christianity; the Basils, the Chrysostoms, the Augustines. The authority of the first of these eminent prelates was produced in the Council of Nice, from an oration against Julian¹. St. Chrysostom, in his liturgy, says of the priest, that he bows his head to the image of Jesus Christ, and to that of his virgin mother²: and the great St. Augustine proclaims aloud the same doctrine, relative to the honour due to images, in terms not to be misconstrued³. But let us proceed to reply to the specific difficulties of our *reformed* theologian.

I. The catechist says, that God forbade any likeness to be made of himself; therefore none can be worshipped. It is true that the Jews were laid under peculiar restrictions, even to the making of any similitude or likeness of any thing in the heavens, the earth, and the waters, as appears from the passage referred to by the catechist⁴; but this prohibition arose from their proneness to idolatry, and, as the Scripture expresses it, from an apprehension lest they should *corrupt themselves*. This order, however, was

¹ Act. II. *ibid*.

² St. Chrys. Litur. apud Savil. tom. vi. ad calcem operis.

³ St. Aug. de Trin. lib. 3. c. 10.

⁴ Deut. iv. 15, et seq.

not designed to operate in all cases, or under all circumstances ; otherwise how could the catechist tolerate at this day, *the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth*¹. If this order were generally and permanently to be carried into effect, how could the Almighty himself have directed the brazen serpent and the figure of the cherubim to be formed? Even the honest catechist has no objection to see the Holy Ghost represented in the form of a dove ; the whole concern that he has or ought to have is, that the creature be not adored for the Creator.

II. The worship forbidden by the second commandment, or according to our division of the commandments, by the first, is of this latter description ; that divine adoration be not given to idols ; but the relative veneration paid to images, so satisfactorily explained, is by no means opposed to the paramount duty which we owe to God.

III. When the catechist asserts, that the Israelites adored the true God under the figure of a calf, he appears to me to possess some properties of that animal, which was the object of the Jewish adoration ; for the intent of those idola-

¹ Dent. iv. 17, 18.

ters cannot be mistaken, as appears incontestibly from the clear recital of the sacred historian, who records the transaction¹; *and the Lord said unto Moses, go, get thee down; for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, these be thy Gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* Such was the crime of Israel, complete and manifest idolatry; but what connexion has this hideous transgression with the relative veneration paid to a picture, founded on the same principle, on which the catechist cherishes the memorial of a departed parent?

IV. Here, in the corresponding number, we possess an additional instance of the *unparalleled skill* of the catechist in the practices of Christian antiquity. Let it be published in Gaza, let it be heard in Askalon. He says, that the Primitive Christians never suffered images to be painted on the walls of their churches, as they accounted the worship unlawful. The truth is, they had no churches for the first three hundred years, on the walls of which they could exhibit the decorations of painting and statuary. It is well known that the Christian religion, during that length-

¹ Exod. xxxii. 7, 8.

ened period, was proscribed by the majesty of Rome; that its observance was assailed by almost a continual and relentless persecution, and that it was not till the beginning of the fourth century, that the public exercise of the religion of Christ was established in the Roman empire. That the first Christians, however, did not consider the veneration of images as unlawful, appears from a fact recorded by Tertullian, that in his time, that is, in the second and third centuries, it was usual to have the image of the good shepherd engraven on their chalices¹. To the same effect Eusebius, the parent of ecclesiastical history, relates, that he had seen a brazen statue of the woman cured by touching the hem of our Saviour's garment, and various paintings of him and of his apostles Peter and Paul; and that a plant grew at the base of the statue, which removed every species of disorder².

V. When the catechist asserts, that many councils of old have condemned this practice of venerating images, he should have added, that these were either false councils, not admitted by the Catholic Church, or provincial councils, that were studious to remove local abuses; for no general council, the grand organ of Catholic belief, ever censured this practice. On the contrary, the seventh general council, held in 787,

¹ Tertull. de Pudicit. c. 10,

² Euseb. Hist. lib. 7. c. 18.

fully established it ; and no doubt was ever entertained in the church of the propriety of the decision.

VI. It is really a matter of some toil, to correct the errors of the catechist, on the subject of ecclesiastical history. Let me tell him to this effect, that the Carpocratians were *not* accounted heretics, for following the Catholic practice, as here explained ; but for treating images as the Pagans treated their idols ; and for placing the memorials of our Redeemer on the same level with the representations of Homer, of Pythagoras, and of Plato¹.

VII. But, says the catechist, God not only forbids us to place any virtue in images, but any falling down before them in a religious way, whatever the intention may be. My answer is, that all this is directly *untrue* ; for the reader has only to turn to the two passages cited², to be convinced that God forbids *manifest idolatry only*, but by no means every demonstration of respect to religious memorials : otherwise how could the Protestant venerate his Bible, bow at the name of Jesus, and perform a variety of actions, which are rendered lawful by the *intention* that directs them ?

¹ Compare St. Irenæus, lib. i. c. 24, with St. Epiphani. Hær. 27 et 79.

² Jer. xi. 26, 27. Is. xlv. 17, 18.

VIII. Again the catechist confounds the actions of heathens with the practice of the Catholic church respecting images, but the difference is immense. The Pagans, as appears from every monument of antiquity, gave divine honours to created objects; the Catholic church ever honoured created memorials, for the relation which they bore to God and holy things.

IX. The fact relative to St. Epiphanius is correct; but it by no means justifies the conclusion of the catechist. The holy prelate apprehended some superstitious practice relating to images, among his converts from idolatry; and this induced him to remove what, under certain circumstances, might prove hurtful¹. On the same principle, we snatch legitimate weapons of defence, and even common instruments of use, from the hands that are likely to pervert them to mischievous purposes. But as to the general practice of the church at that period, not the smallest doubt can exist².

X. The statement concerning the supposed difference between the second Council of Nice and that of Francfort, invincibly proves, among many instances, how superficially the catechist is versed in ecclesiastical antiquity. If the Council of Francfort had really differed from the

¹ See St. Epiph. ad Joan. Hier. inter opera Hieron.

² See the body of this article.

second Council of Nice on a doctrinal point, its authority as a provincial synod must have been overborne by the influence which a general council possesses in the Catholic church. But the fact is, the supposed difference between these councils, originated in a mere mistake. The second Council of Nice was held in 787; that of Francfort in 794. In the latter was produced an unfaithful translation of some part of the acts of the former; in which these venerable fathers were represented as giving the same adoration to pictures, as is given to the Trinity: these fathers, however, carefully distinguished between relative honour and supreme adoration; and the error existed only in the faulty translation from the Greek original¹. The same supposition was also adopted by the author of the Caroline books. The knowledge of this curious fact ought not to have escaped the attention of the catechist and his friends; since one of their own divines candidly acknowledges the truth of the statement here given².

After this clear and brief refutation of the objections of the catechist, will this *candid divine* accept of the opinions of two eminent doctors of his own church on the subject? "As to the use

¹ See and compare the acts of both Councils, t. vii. p. 1057 et 187.

² See Thorndike, Epilogue, part iii. p. 363.

of images in the worship of God," says Dr. Samuel Parker, "I cannot but wonder at the confidence of these men, to make so bold a charge against them in general, (the Catholics) when the images of the cherubim were commanded by God himself¹, which instance is so plain and obvious to every reader, there being nothing more remarkable in the Old Testament than the honour done to the cherubim, that it is a much greater wonder to me that those men would advance the objection of idolatry so *groundlessly*, and can so slightly rid themselves of so pregnant a proof against it²."

"The pictures of Christ," says Montague, "of the Blessed Virgin, and the saints, may be had in houses, set up in churches; respect and honour may be given to them, the Protestants give it; you say that they must not have latria, so say we; you give them dulia; I quarrel not with the word; though I could. There is a respect due to the pictures of Christ and his saints. If you call this dulia, we give it too; let doctrine and practice go together, *we agree*³."

After all these authorities and reasonings on the subject of that veneration which is paid by the Catholic church to images, and after this

¹ Exodus xxv. 18.

² Parker's Reasons for Abrogating the Test, p. 130.

³ Montague, Gagger gagged, p. 300.

candid and honourable admission of those two ancient Protestant divines, the ornaments of the established church in their times, will the catechist forgive me for supposing, that if a particle of truth and candour enter his composition, he will retract his errors, and do homage to that church, which our Redeemer promised to support to the end of the world?

QUESTION XV.

Why do you reject the use of indulgences, and dispensations of the treasure of the Church?

ANSWER.

1. Because they are built upon false foundations, such as purgatory, supererogations of saints, *i. e.* their doing more than was necessary, God's imperfect forgiving of sins, and satisfactions to be made to the justice of God.
2. These indulgences are not things so much as heard of in the primitive church, for they are wholly engrossed by the pope, who sends his servants abroad to sell them for money.
3. Though in the primitive church the respective bishops, in their dioceses, relaxed the time of a true penitent's severity he was to undergo, yet they never pretended to free the penitent from the pains of purgatory, much less to apply to them the superfluous merits of saints, as is done in these popish indulgences.
4. They have no foundation in Scripture, by the confession of their own learned men; and they came very late into the church, not till twelve hundred years after Christ; and it is evident they are used as a means to get money.
5. By these indulgences men are hindered from a true repentance; for they pretend to release men both from sin and punishment, at least the people are suffered to think so, if they do but say so many prayers, or go in pilgrimage to such a place, or abstain on certain days from certain sorts of meat, or give a large sum of money for the building of a church, or go to war against infidels, &c.

OBSERVATIONS.

BEFORE I commence my series of observations on this article of indulgences, I must congratulate the catechist, at least on this single ground,

that he has not adopted the vulgar and disingenuous misrepresentation so often resorted to, that an indulgence is understood in the Catholic church to be a license to commit sin, or an anticipated pardon of sin to be committed. This he probably considers a slander; and he shows a certain liberality of mind in rejecting so foul an imputation. But still the catechist has much to learn on this, as well as other subjects connected with religion; and for his information, and that of the general reader, I must proceed to state, that the Catholic church means nothing else by *an indulgence*, than *a release of the temporal punishment due to such sins as have been actually forgiven by the sacrament of penance*. This plain statement of the Catholic doctrine is sufficient to discountenance the vulgar notion of the ignorant, the prejudiced, or the malevolent, that an indulgence implies either leave to commit sin, or grants, by anticipation, the pardon of future transgressions; for, in fact, it regards not immediately and directly the pardon of any sin whatever; on the contrary, it requires and presupposes sin to be already forgiven by hearty contrition and the sacrament of penance. Thus all the scandal, slander, and infamy, which have been heaped on the Catholic church on this ground, during the course of three centuries, are scattered in the wind, by the fair statement of our doctrine.

In order to produce to the satisfaction of the reader, a rational and real ground for admitting the doctrine of indulgences, we have to establish three propositions ; the first is, that God, after forgiving sin, usually apports a certain share of temporal punishment to be borne by the sinner ; the second is, that Christ has left in the church a power to remit this punishment ; and the third is, that this remission of the temporal pains, or the use of indulgences, has been constantly practised in the church. Nothing will be found clearer than the grounds, by which these three propositions are usually established.

Of the first proposition, that God, on forgiving sin, usually reserves to the sinner a certain portion of temporal pain, the slightest knowledge of the Scripture supplies the most abundant proof. It is known to those who have any knowledge of religion, that we are all born with the original stain of the transgression of him, *in whom all have sinned*¹, and that sin has entailed on all the children of Adam every species of temporal evil. This original sin, however, has been removed in various ways, in the law of nature, the law of Moses, and the law of grace ; and yet the attendant pains of death, and the evils of suffering humanity, still remain. In the history of the Israelites, we find that stiff-necked

¹ Rom. v. 12.

people offending God by their violent murmurs¹; the Almighty expresses his displeasure with a solemn menace of disinheritance and destruction²; Moses interposes, and obtains their pardon³; yet the temporal punishment of dying in the wilderness, and the consequent exclusion from the land of promise, are not removed⁴. When God proclaimed pardon to David, by his prophet Nathan, for the enormous crimes of murder and adultery, he still made severe denunciations of temporal sufferings; all which threats were carried into full effect⁵. Various other examples might be produced from Scripture, which invincibly prove, that God, on forgiving sin, usually reserves a certain portion of temporal punishment to be endured by the sinner.

The next proposition to be established is, that Christ has left in his church a power to remit the temporal punishment, which has been proved to exist after the remission of sin. For this purpose, the reader has only to open his Scripture, and see the extensive and unbounded power which our Redeemer bequeathed to the apostles and their legitimate successors. To Peter, he says: *I will give unto thee the KEYS of the kingdom of HEAVEN; and WHATSOEVER thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven*⁶. And

¹ Num. xiv. 2.² Ibid. 11, 12.³ Ibid. 13—20.⁴ Ibid. 22, 23.⁵ See and compare 2 Kings, al.⁶ 2 Sam. xii. 13, et seq. ch. xiv. ch. xviii.⁶ Matt. xvi. 19.

again, to the other apostles: *VERILY I say unto you, WHATSOEVER ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and WHATSOEVER ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven*¹. Here, the intelligent reader may remark, is promised by our Redeemer to his apostles, and, in their persons, to their successors, a clear, ample, broad, uncontrolled power, of removing every possible obstacle which can, by any construction, impede the ingress of the soul into the kingdom of heaven; consequently the license of dispensing with the temporal punishment to be endured after the remission of sin, must necessarily be included. Here is no distinction, no modification, no reserve expressed, not even insinuated. All is clear and intelligible to the meanest capacity; and we have only to establish the third proposition, that the church has ever exercised the power thus granted.

Here we may ask, Who ever understood the spirit of Christ better than St. Paul? Who was ever more qualified to ascertain the extent of that power which our Lord left to his church? Now we find the great apostle actually exercising the power of granting an indulgence, constantly and invariably claimed by the Catholic church. One of the early converts to the Christian religion falls into an enormous crime; he is removed from

¹ Matt. xviii. 18.

the assemblies of the faithful by excommunication, and placed under a tremendous course of penance; he gives unequivocal signs of repentance, and his sufferings are abridged by an indulgence, pronounced in the name of Christ¹. This is precisely the conduct and discipline followed by the church at various periods. To satisfy the divine justice, to devise a salutary check on the sinner, and to obviate the facility of a relapse into great crimes, temporal chastisements are inflicted, which must either be endured in this life, or the debt will remain to be cancelled in another. The penitent shows extraordinary signs of repentance; and the church, in imitation of St. Paul, and by virtue of the power left by Christ, for grave reasons interposes, and grants either a partial or a plenary indulgence, according to the circumstances of the case.

Of the exercise of this power, innumerable examples occur in the faithful records of Christian antiquity: the earliest fathers are witnesses of the practice of the church in this particular; and from the twelfth century even the catechist entertains no doubt on the subject. Tertullian, in his celebrated address to the Martyrs, evidently refers to it as a practice established in the church²: and St. Cyprian describes the effects of

¹ See and compare 1 Cor. v. 4, 5, with 2 Cor. ii. 6, et seq.

² Vide Tertull. ad Martyr. circ. init.

such an indulgence, not only as operating on the immediate release of the sinner from the canonical penance, but as removing the debt due to the divine justice¹. This, with various other evidence to be found in the works of St. Cyprian, is of so satisfactory a nature, as to the practice of the church in the purest ages, that we forbear farther quotations.—But let us hear the catechist.

I. He is pleased to say, that this doctrine of indulgences is built on false foundations, namely, on purgatory, the supererogation of the saints, imperfect forgiveness, and the necessity of satisfaction to the divine justice. As to the doctrine of purgatory, we have already given full information on that subject. With respect to what is alleged, concerning the share borne by the saints in this concern, we have to state with the utmost certainty, that independently of the grace and merit of our Redeemer, nothing can be achieved; *for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*². If, therefore, we connect the merit and suffrages of the saints with the satisfaction of our Redeemer, we barely consider them as his friends, owing every thing to his merits, acting under the influence of his grace, and co-operating with his designs. As to the imperfect remission of sin,

¹ See this celebrated and satisfactory testimony, St. Cyprian, Epist. 13, 14, edit. Pamel., Epist. 18, 19, edit. Oxon.

² Acts, iv. 12.

let me again correct that notorious error, which makes an indulgence consist in the remission of sin, and not in the release of the temporal punishment due after the sin has been actually forgiven. With regard to the necessity of satisfying the divine justice, no man that has the slightest acquaintance with the divine oracles, can call it in question. Does not St. Paul declare that he *rejoices* in his *sufferings*, and that he *fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ*, and that not for himself only, but for the whole church¹? He unquestionably does not mean to assert, that the ransom of our Redeemer was insufficient as to its value; but he positively requires, that we should co-operate with it on our part, in order that, agreeably to the idea of St. Bernard, the members may retain some resemblance to their head.

II. That these indulgences were not heard of in the primitive church, that they are wholly engrossed by the pope, and that they are sold for money, are three *notorious falsehoods*. Of the antiquity of the practice, we have already afforded the most unexceptionable evidence: as to the pope's authority on the subject, it is true, that he alone can confer an indulgence on *all members* of the Catholic church, as his jurisdiction extends to the limits of the Catholic world; but it is

¹ Coloss. i. 24.

untrue to assert, that he engrosses the whole concern; for each bishop in his diocess has a right not only to grant an indulgence, but to prohibit the publication of any such grant among his flock, without his express leave¹. As to the sale of indulgences, it is a vulgar and coarse slander, disreputable to the dignity of a gentleman who countenances it, and fatal to the credit of a writer who publishes it to the world. Indulgences are usually granted on the performances of certain good works, which are reducible to prayer, fasting, and alms deeds; and the money bestowed on charitable objects, instead of passing into the coffers of the pope, is given at the discretion of the penitent.

III. The ideas of the catechist concerning the relaxation of canonical penances, in the first ages, are proved to be perfectly erroneous, by the authority of St. Cyprian, to which we before referred. For this father distinctly states, that those who had received the benefit of an indulgence at the request of the martyrs, might be *assisted before God* by their interposition; and in the event of infirmity and danger, might, after making their confession, and receiving the imposition, *be sent to the Lord with the peace promised to them by the martyrs*². This passage invincibly proves, that the effect of the cele-

¹ Vide Collet. Append. de Indulg. cap. ii. conclus. 3, ad calcem Tract. de Matrimon.

² Vid. St. Cypr. loc. cit.

brated indulgences granted at the request of the martyrs, not only procured the relaxation of the canonical penances, but were available in the sight of God to cancel the entire debt.

IV. The calumnies contained in this corresponding number, have been amply refuted in our preceding pages. As to the vulgar charge before noticed, of accumulating money by these grants, let it be farther known, that if the church, by her ministers, point out any good works, towards which any contributions may be solicited, she guards against all mean desires of gain, and the low feelings of avarice, with the most delicate circumspection; and surely she cannot be chargeable with such abuses as she strictly prohibits¹.

V. The apprehensions of the catechist, that indulgences may prevent true repentance, arise solely from his want of information on the subject. The use of indulgences cannot prevent that, the previous existence of which is absolutely necessary that they be brought into operation. By true repentance, and the use of the sacrament of penance, sin must first be remitted before an indulgence can be obtained: then the good works prescribed are to be performed by the penitent in a state of grace, unstained by mortal sin, and without affection to sin. The good

¹ Vid. Conc. Trid. Decrét. de Indulg.

Christian who is taught and encouraged to obtain the effects of an indulgence, is invariably told that he is not to be exempted from leading a penitential life, and from taking up his cross and following his Redeemer. He is perpetually reminded that the church, by her grants of this description, designs not to promote indifference and pusillanimity in the divine service, but to excite fervour and devotion. When the catechist comes to understand the nature and properties of these spiritual favours, he will probably be ashamed of his gross ignorance and consequent misstatements; and may possibly regret, with Dr. Johnson, that combination of circumstances, which prevents him from dying in the bosom of the Catholic church¹.

¹ See Boswell's Life, vol. iii. p. 552, edit. 8vo. 1793.

QUESTION XVI.

Why do not you believe that the Church of Rome is the Catholic Church?

ANSWER.

1. Because there are vast multitudes of Christians in the world which are not in communion with the Church of Rome, and yet are members of the Catholic, *i. e.* Christ's universal church, dispersed all the world over.
2. To say, that the Church of Rome is the Catholic Church, is to say, that a part is the whole; or that a house is a whole city, or that one member is the whole body.
3. The primitive Christians did not take the Church of Rome to be the only Catholic Church.
4. God hath no where in Scripture declared so much.
5. To say the Church of Rome is the only Catholic Church, is a most uncharitable doctrine, and to damn the greater part of the Christian world.
6. All churches that do hold the ancient faith contained in the three creeds, are members of the Catholic Church.
7. The Church of Rome is so far from being the only Catholic Church, that her unwarrantable doctrines make her, at the best, but an unsound member of the Catholic Church.

OBSERVATIONS.

In order perfectly to obviate the objections of the Catechist and of Protestants on this subject, and to afford clear ideas on that which forms the real matter of discussion, I must previously inform my opponent, that the terms, "the Church of Rome," have two distinct meanings; that they either designate the particular diocese of Rome,

which the Pope governs with episcopal jurisdiction; or they mean, the whole Catholic church throughout the world, in communion with the see of Rome, acknowledging the Pope the vicar of Christ, and successor of St. Peter. In this latter sense only do we invariably speak, when we call the church of Rome, the Catholic church.

That the church of Rome in this sense is really and truly the church of Christ, cannot be a matter of doubt to those, who admit the three creeds in the plain and obvious sense of the words. I beg the most serious and deliberate attention of the catechist and his friends to their own admission, and particularly to the direct and inevitable consequences, connected with that fundamental point. They believe, with the framers of the Apostles' creed, "the Holy Catholic Church," and with the authors of the Nicene creed, they profess to believe, "ONE, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." From this admission, it directly and immediately follows as a consequence, which must be deemed inevitable, that our Redeemer has always had, from the foundation of Christianity, a church on earth; and that this church has ever been distinguished by the four marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. Though our adversaries, by the admission of the three creeds, necessarily recognise the perpetual existence and visibility of

this church, with its attendant marks, it is a fair and proper mode of treating the question, to establish the perpetual appearance of this church, to prove the reality of its marks from the Scripture, and to ascertain to what society of Christians respectively they belong.

To be fully convinced, without entertaining the possibility of doubt, that Christ has always had upon earth a church, or a society of the faithful, governed by lawful pastors, teaching the divine will, and uniting all its members in one fold, the reader has only to open his Scripture, and give but a slight attention to the manifest predictions of the prophets on the church, and to the undeniable declarations of our Redeemer on the same subject. In the dignified strains of Isaiah, the church of Christ is represented as *a mountain established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills*; it is stated, that *ALL NATIONS shall flow unto it; that people will go up to the house of the God of Jacob, and exclaim: he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths*¹: by the same prophet its greatness, its amplitude, and its perpetual existence, are described in most glowing colours²; it is there distinctly said³, that *the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be*

¹ Isaiah, ii. 2, 3.

² Ibid. liv. tot. capite.

³ Ibid. ver. 10.

removed. By the same inspired writer, we are told in exalted strains¹: *this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my spirit is upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth, SHALL NOT DEPART OUT OF THY MOUTH, NOR OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THY SEED, NOR OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THY SEED'S SEED, FROM HENCEFORTH AND FOR EVER.* What noble, splendid and convincing testimonies are these of the perpetual existence, visibility, amplitude, and indefectibility of that church, which was to subsist for ever. If to this we add what the same prophet says, in his sixtieth and sixty-second chapters; if we subjoin the important testimony of the prophet Daniel, who calls the church of Christ *a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed*²; if we refer also to the predictions of Micah, who emulates in some degree the exalted and glowing language of Isaiah, on the subject of the church; if we couple the whole with the well-known declarations of our Redeemer, that he would *build his church on a rock, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it*³; and again, *that he would be with it all days to the end of the world*⁴; we shall want nothing to produce in the minds of the most sceptic, a calm and intimate conviction of this fundamental truth, that there always has been, and that there ever will be to the end

¹ Isaiah, lix. 21.

² Matt. xvi. 18.

³ Dan. ii. 44.

⁴ Ibid. xxviii. 20.

of time, **ONE CHURCH**, divinely assisted, perpetually visible, and teaching the will of God, in defiance of all opposition.

Here the grand and important question arises, to what society of Christians, are these declarations, promises, and assurances of divine protections to be applied? are they meant to designate all the societies of those, who call themselves Christians, taken collectively? or are they to be understood of any particular sect, viewed separately, which has appeared during the last three hundred years? or finally, are they to be clearly and distinctly applied to that illustrious society of believers, in communion with the see of Rome, which has subsisted from the first period of Christianity to the present hour? These are truly important and interesting questions, involving in their consequences, whatever is dear to the heart of man.

That these promises, relating clearly to one visible church, which was to subsist for ever, cannot be understood of the whole collection of various sects which divide the Christian world, appears indubitably clear to a man who consults his reason for a single moment. Truth of its own nature is but *one*; consequently the God of all truth cannot be said to sanction the whole collection of those, who have the name of Christian, and treat them as members of his church, since they all differ in faith, in worship, and dis-

cipline, and all maintain a heterogeneous mass of jarring and discordant opinions. He cannot say of the same object *it is*, and *it is not*¹. Besides, how can the whole collection of sects, which now divide the Christian world, lay any claim to the effect of those promises of perpetual visibility, when before the period of fifteen hundred they had positively no existence? How can they subsist in virtue of these promises of God, when, in order to obtain credit with the people, they represent the state of Christendom, before their appearance, as immersed in darkness and error; and consequently they must be understood to say, that these fair assurances have proved illusive? The language of the prophets, coupled with that of our Redeemer, is that the church is to be considered as a kingdom, which is to stand for ever, a city upon a mountain, a church built on a rock; a school, in which ALL TRUTH was to be taught. The plea of those, calling themselves reformers, invariably is, that darkness, error, superstition, idolatry, with a long catalogue of other infamous crimes, prevailed in the church; and that they, without claiming a divine commission, commenced the work of reform. Thus we may ask again and again, how can such portions of Christians, either collectively or separately, pretend to be the church of Christ, when to establish their

¹ 2 Cor. i. 18, 19.

existence as such, they contradict the clearest assurances of their God, conveyed by his prophets, and set the declarations of their Redeemer at defiance? The same observations, that are applicable to all sects, taken collectively, are clearly suitable to each, as a separate class of religionists. For each form of Protestantism made its appearance more than fifteen hundred years after the establishment of Christianity; and each rests on the same sandy foundation.

The only fair and inevitable conclusion then is, that as no sect separately, nor all of them collectively, can establish their claim to be considered as the church of Christ, this grand and important privilege must be reserved for that illustrious society of believers in communion with the see of Rome; for that reason known by the title of the Roman Catholic church.

This reasoning is so decisive, that the reader must see with intuitive readiness, that it is utterly impossible to introduce Protestantism into the world under any form, without silencing the prophets, and giving the lie to our Redeemer. For, as it has been proved, the concurrent testimonies of both show, that a church was to subsist *for ever*, teaching ALL TRUTH: the reformers, in order to establish their innovations, represented the church as fallen into every species of impiety and crime that can disgrace human nature: surely those who thus openly and professedly

contradict their God and Redeemer, cannot pretend to act by a commission derived from that divine source.

If the four essential marks of the true church, viz. unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity, be severally examined and carefully investigated, it will be found that the Roman Catholic church *only* can lay a fair and exclusive claim to these distinguished characteristics. Of his church our Redeemer said, *there shall be one fold, and one shepherd*¹; and St. Paul to the same effect says, *there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism*². All this implies, that there must be in the church of Christ, precisely the same faith; for God cannot approve two modes of faith, one of which contradicts the other: to consolidate this union, there must be also a due subjection to the same authority, and the whole body must be connected together by the use of the same sacraments. This essential unity the Roman Catholic church has always exhibited, by invariably professing the same faith, by a constant obedience to pastors, acknowledging the jurisdiction of the chief pastor, and by admitting the same number of sacraments. Such is the claim of the Roman Catholic church to this first grand mark, by which the true church of Christ is made known. But what alleges the Protestant on this momen-

¹ John, x. 16.

² Ephes. iv. 6.

tous article? He surrenders the point without a contest. He may indeed admit *in words* One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church; but he knows full well, that Protestantism began in the world, by denying the ancient faith, by separating from the existing, lawful, and acknowledged authority, and by discarding almost all the sacraments; he is equally aware, that in all its various and innumerable changes and modifications, it uniformly preserves the same character. Not only is Protestantism deprived of the inestimable characteristic of unity; but by allowing the right of private judgment to each individual, without the interference of any authority, it absolutely precludes the possibility of any degree of union in spiritual matters. What would be the situation of a kingdom, or of a state of any description, in which the laws should be left to the arbitrary and interested construction of individuals, without the intervention of magistrates, lawyers, judges, and courts of judicature? what could possibly ensue, but confusion, disunion, and anarchy? and how can any other result be expected from a system of religion conducted on the same principles, than that, which the history of Protestantism has always exhibited; a system of perpetual and unceasing variation?

As to Holiness, the second mark of the true church, the prophet Isaiah had said¹ that *a high-*

¹ Ch. xxxv. 8.

way shall be here, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness ; and our Redeemer had declared, that he would send down the HOLY SPIRIT, that should abide for ever, and teach ALL TRUTH¹. The Roman Catholic church lays her claim to this mark, by displaying an uninterrupted series of persons, who from age to age have lived and died within her pale, and have, by following her doctrine, exhibited innumerable instances of superior sanctity. But what says the Protestant? he boldly and rudely denies the existence of this mark for many centuries. Where Christ says, that he will send down the Spirit of Truth, to teach all truth, and remain for ever, the reformer wantonly asserts, that every species of error and wickedness had prevailed. How, then, can the Protestant, with a shadow of consistency, state a claim to the mark of holiness, when the existence of Protestantism depends upon the supposed disappearance of sanctity for many ages? This clearly bars any claim, which the advocates of Protestantism might produce in favour of any modern sect, or of the innumerable collection of sects, to the enviable privilege of this second mark.

With as little reason can Protestantism, under any form, claim to be considered the Catholic church. Agreeably to the manifest declarations

¹ John, loc. cit.

of the prophets, the true church of Christ was, as the term Catholic imports, to be diffused over the world ; to be the church of all ages ; all nations were to walk in its light ; in other words, it was to be universal in time and place¹. Now, can any Protestant, either waking or sleeping, imagine, that any modern sect can pretend to the honour and dignity of being considered the Catholic church, when for fifteen hundred years after Christ, Protestantism, under any form, had no existence, and the number of its followers is so comparatively small, that to designate it by the title of the Catholic church, would be to expose it to scorn and derision ? Not so the Roman Catholic church. She alone has ever retained the name, and always demonstrated the reality of her claim. The professors of her creed have always obeyed pastors, in communion with the sovereign pontiffs ; a succession of whom, from St. Peter to the present Pope, is a fact as clear and certain, as the succession of the kings of England, from Egbert to his present Majesty. This church **ALONE** has been diffused over all nations ; at the period called the Reformation, it was the only church in these parts of Christendom ; it must therefore be considered

¹ See Isaiah, loc. cit. ; Malach. i. 11 ; Gen. xxii. 18 ; Ps. ii. 8, item lxxii. 5, 11.

the Catholic church, or, the predictions of the prophets, and the promises of our Redeemer, have proved illusive. Let the Protestant pronounce on the alternative.

As to Apostolicity, the case is equally clear and decisive. Those only can lay any claim to this mark who can display *a real mission*, as the apostles did; and who persevere in teaching the same doctrine, which had been once delivered, and in acknowledging the authority that had been once established. On this part of the subject, the words of Christ cannot admit of a shadow of doubt: *As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you*¹. And again, we cannot but advert to his assurances, so often referred to, that he would remain with his church to the end of the world, and that he would send down the Spirit of truth, that should abide FOR EVER². Here we may briefly observe to the Protestant of every denomination, that he can produce NO APOSTOLIC MISSION, either of an ordinary, or of an extraordinary nature; and that he pretends to none; that he neither received an ordinary commission from the church to reform her doctrine, nor did he prove a divine commission, by signs, miracles, and wonders, to achieve the work. As to doctrine, instead of persisting in the profession of

¹ John, xx. 21.

² Ibid. loc. cit.

what was taught by the apostles, the very name and substance of Protestantism demonstratively prove, that it is a dissent from those tenets which mankind had learned from the church of Christ ; a church which, agreeably to the divine promises, was ever taught, directed, and assisted by the Spirit of God. How therefore can any sect of Protestants, or all of them together, claim to be considered the church of Christ, when they have no pretensions to this mark of apostolicity, or, as I have proved, to any of the marks which *they profess* to admit in the Nicene creed.

In this tremendous perplexity, I leave the catechist to meditate on a passage of St. Augustine, in which that distinguished father stated, about fourteen hundred years ago, the reasons which detained him in the Catholic church. The catechist will excuse the length of the quotation, which I here give in the words of the venerable writer:—" Ut ergo hanc omittam sapientiam, quam in Ecclesiâ esse Catholicâ non creditis, multa sunt alia, quæ in ejus gremio me justissime teneant. Tenet consensio populorum atque gentium ; tenet auctoritas miraculis inchoata, spe nutrita, charitate aucta, vetustate firmata : tenet ab ipsâ sede Petri Apostoli, cui pascendas oves suas post resurrectionem Dominus commendavit, usque ad præsentem Episcopatum successio Sacerdotum : tenet postremo ipsum Catholicæ nomen, quod non sine causâ, inter tam multas hæreses,

sic ista ecclesia sola obtinuit, ut cum omnes hæretici se Catholicos dici velint; quærenti tamen peregrino alicui, ubi ad Catholicam conveniatur, nullus hæreticorum vel basilicam suam vel domum audeat ostendere¹.”—“To say nothing, therefore, of this wisdom, the existence of which you deny to the Catholic church, there are many other reasons which most justly detain me in its bosom. I am held in it by the consent of countries and of nations; I am held by an authority which miracles have contributed to establish, which hope has fostered, which charity has increased, and to which time has given stability. I am held by an uninterrupted succession of pastors, from St. Peter, to whom our Lord consigned the feeding of his flock after his resurrection, to the present pontiff: finally, I am held in its bosom by the name of Catholic, which this church has deservedly retained, by an exclusive right, amidst so many heresies; for, though all heretics wish to be called Catholics, yet, if a stranger should inquire the way to the Catholic church, none of them would have the assurance to direct the inquirer to his house or temple.”

If these reasons could prove so decisive to St. Augustine, in the fourth age, let me ask the catechist, why they should not be deemed equally so in the nineteenth century? especially as the

¹ St. Aug. contra Epist. Fundament. c. 4.

lapse of so many hundred years has proved that our Lord has redeemed his pledge, by the constant protection which he has afforded to his church. But let us dispatch the weak observations of *our lame theologian*.

I. The church of Rome, says the catechist, cannot be the Catholic church, because there are vast multitudes of Christians dispersed over the world, who are not in its communion, and yet are members of Christ's universal church. To this we triumphantly reply, that it is not enough to bear the name of Christian, in order to be a member of the church ; it is necessary, as we have proved, to profess one uniform faith, to obey one authority, and to be connected by the use of the same sacraments : for there is but *one God, one faith, one baptism*. The multitudes alluded to by the catechist, do not profess this one faith ; they have shaken off this authority, and abandoned the use of these sacraments : to shew a species of liberality, and to flatter the natural pride of the human heart, they allow, at least in practice, to each individual, the privilege of coining his own faith from the written word ; and thus they open the door to interminable disunion. Besides, as we have seen, they are all destitute of the other essential marks, which peculiarly designate the church of Christ ; they, consequently, must abandon all pretension to such an honour.

II. The second objection, which represents us as asserting, that a part is a whole, or that a house is a city, is founded either on wilful misrepresentation, or gross ignorance. Whenever we assert, that the church of Rome is the Catholic church, we do not mean, as I have before stated, that the diocess of Rome is of this description; but we speak of the whole body of the faithful, in communion with the see of Rome.

III. The third objection contains a direct falsehood; and it can be stated with certainty, that there is no fact more indubitable in history, than that the first Christians considered the church of Rome, in the sense explained, to be the true church of Christ¹.

IV. Then it is said, that God has no where in Scripture declared so much. God has clearly declared in Scripture the existence, the visibility, the amplitude, the dignity, the indefectibility, the unerring authority of his spiritual kingdom, or his church; he has pronounced that it should stand unshaken on a rock, in defiance of the gates of hell; that he will protect it to the end of the world; that it is the pillar and foundation of truth; that we are bound to obey it under pain

¹ Among innumerable authorities, see particularly Iren. lib. iii. c. 1, 2, 3, 4; Cyprian. de Unitat. Eccles. passim; Tertull. de Præscr. p. 20, 21, 30, 31, 32. 36; St. Aug. loc. cit. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. vii. c. 30.

of being considered as heathens or publicans¹. Now, no sect whatever, or any collection of sects, can aspire to these marks, these honours, and these prerogatives, but the Roman Catholic church; for none of the present sects had an existence before the year one thousand five hundred. The conclusion is clear and inevitable.

V. Then it is said to be uncharitable to damn all the Christian world, besides the professors of one creed. To this we reply, that we do not make the conditions of salvation, but that we receive them as proposed by our Redeemer; that he peremptorily requires true faith and submission to his church, as essentially requisite; that, consequently, it must be in a high degree charitable to instruct the ignorant, and to recal the wandering Christian to the right path. Besides, the catechist, who admits the damnatory clause in the Athanasian creed, has himself to explain this difficulty.

VI. Again it is said, that all churches, holding the three creeds, are to be considered as members of the Catholic church. True; provided their faith and practice be not altogether at variance. But when we find certain sects *professing in words* to believe the holy Catholic church, and then as sturdily rejecting her tenets, and setting her decisions at defiance; when we observe

¹ Vide loc. cit.

successors of St. Peter, by the general consent of the church, and sanctioned by the clear decision of councils, the authority of which can admit no doubt. If these points can be clearly and satisfactorily established, the superiority of the Roman see must be admitted beyond controversy.

To begin with the first, we find that our Redeemer, agreeably to his usual practice, when he was about to form any extraordinary or permanent institution, previously issued a distinct promise, relating to the accomplishment of his purpose. We observe, that he held this conduct, before he proceeded to institute baptism and the holy eucharist¹. On the present subject, we see, that he proposed to his disciples the important and decisive question, relating to his own person and character²; that they reported the various opinions of others on the subject³; that when the question was proposed more immediately to the disciples, Peter, without any hesitation, and without any communication with the rest, boldly declared our Redeemer to be, *the Christ, the Son of the living God*⁴, and that this answer is ascribed by Truth itself, not to the dictates of flesh and blood, but to an immediate revelation from above⁵. In answer to this exalted sentiment, uttered by PETER ALONE,

¹ John, iii. 5; vi. 51, et seq.

² Ibid. 14.

⁴ Ibid. 16.

³ Matt. xvi. 13.

⁵ Ibid. 17.

our Redeemer evidently singles him out as a person, on whom he promised to confer peculiar honours. *And I also say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and WHATSOEVER thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and WHATSOEVER thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven*¹. Here we observe, that our Lord changes the name of this distinguished disciple from Simon to that of Peter, which in the Syriac language, in which he addressed him, as also in many modern languages of Europe, signifies *a rock*; that in allusion to this new name, he promises to make him the rock, foundation, or corner stone of his new building, namely, his church: and to this spiritual edifice, to be thus built on the person of Peter, he, in language not to be misconstrued, declares that he will give a degree of firmness and stability not to be shaken. All these circumstances coupled together, and examined carefully and impartially, clearly indicate a degree of superiority to be given to Peter alone.

I am not to be told that the true church was to be raised, not upon the person, but upon the confession of Peter. For to what does this

¹ Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

observation amount, when it comes to be analysed, but that our Redeemer, to reward the candid confession, and the splendid acknowledgment made by this disciple of his divinity, elevated him to this sublime dignity. Neither can it be said with any truth, that the other apostles were *equally* the foundations and pillars of the church with Peter; or that he appears to have been invested with no distinctive pre-eminence. It is certainly true, in a general sense, that all the apostles were noble and firm pillars of this great building; that they all received full and ample powers of forgiving sin, of teaching and governing the faithful, with every necessary appendage *to perform their apostolic functions*: but that a superiority of power, a pre-eminent jurisdiction was conferred on Peter, appears both from this clear promise, and from the performance of it, which took place after the resurrection.

In what other light can the conduct of our Redeemer be placed, when he put three distinct times the celebrated question to this apostle, *Simon Peter, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these*¹? and then conferred upon him the government of the whole flock, the lambs and the sheep, that is, as the holy fathers unanimously observe, he consigned to his care not only

¹ John, xxi. 15.

the people but the pastors themselves. Hence St. Jerom, after observing that all the apostles received the power of the keys, adds this remarkable sentence : " One among the twelve, however, is singled out, that by the appointment of a head, the occasion of schism might be removed¹."

On the power conferred upon St. Peter on this memorable occasion, St. Cyprian, the ornament of the third age, who sealed the faith with his blood in 258, writes in this remarkable strain : " Upon him alone (Peter), he (Christ) builds his church, and to him he consigns the care of feeding his sheep ; and though after his resurrection, he bestows on all the apostles an equal power, when he says, *As my Father sent me, so I send you ; receive the Holy Ghost : whose sins you shall forgive, they shall be forgiven ; and whose sins you shall retain, they shall be retained* ; nevertheless, that he might clearly establish unity, he formed *one See*, and by his authority fixed the origin of this same unity by beginning from one. The other apostles were accordingly, like Peter, invested with an equal participation of honour and power ; but the beginning is built on unity. *The primacy is given to Peter, that there might be ex-*

¹ Propterea tamen unus inter duodecim eligitur, ut capite constituto, schismatis tolleretur occasio.—*St. Hier. contra Jovin.* lib. 1. c. xiv.

hibited one Church of Christ, and one See¹." The doctrine, therefore, of St. Cyprian on the subject, cannot possibly be misconceived by the attentive reader. He attributes to all the apostles an equality of power and authority, *in all matters connected with their duty as teachers appointed to instruct the universe*; but he makes a clear reservation of supremacy in favour of Peter, for the reasons which he expressly assigns.

The same is decidedly the doctrine of the whole host of the Greek and Latin fathers. St. Peter is uniformly called the head, the chief, the ruler of the whole church, consisting both of pastors and faithful. "Christ," says St. Epiphanius, "chose Peter to be the leader of the disciples²." The illustrious St. John Chrysostom, speaking on the words *feed my sheep*, asks why the others are passed over, and Peter is questioned in this peculiar manner. He says, in reply to his own question: "*Peter was elevated above the apostles, the mouth of the disciples, and the head of the sacred college³.*"

I am fully sensible, that against a position, so clearly established in the sacred writings, many objections are urged, which at first sight

¹ St. Cyprian. de Unitat. Eccles. circa init. edit. Pamel. 150, Colon. Agripp. 1617, cum notâ 14 Editor. compare this with edit. Oxon. de Unit. Eccles. 77, cum lect. variant.

Hæres. i. 51. ² St. Chrys. Hom. 88, in Joan. circa init.

may appear to superficial observers to carry some weight ; but which, on a closer inspection, prove altogether groundless. In order to show, that St. Peter was by no means superior to St. Paul, it is asserted first, that according to St. Paul¹, the gospel of uncircumcision was committed to the latter, and that the gospel of circumcision was entrusted to Peter ; and that therefore a species of equality appears to be established. Secondly, St. Paul is said to assert², that the care of all the churches lay upon him. Thirdly, it is urged, that he says of himself, that *he is nothing behind the very chiefest apostles*³. Fourthly, it is said, that *he withstood Peter to the face*⁴. Fifthly, it is urged, that Peter was sent by the apostles to Samaria⁵ ; and that he also gave an account of his own conduct to the other apostles⁶. Sixthly, it is affirmed, that from every monument of Christian antiquity, it appears, that both Peter and Paul were joint founders of the church of Rome ; and that consequently, no peculiar pre-eminence was conferred on Peter.

Of all these mighty objections, a short and satisfactory solution is furnished with the utmost facility. 1. When St. Paul says, that the gospel of circumcision was allotted to Peter, and that of uncircumcision to himself, he speaks

¹ Gal. ii. 7.

² 2 Cor. ii. 28.

³ Ibid xii. 11.

⁴ Gal. ii. 11.

⁵ Acts viii. 14.

⁶ Ibid. xi.

solely of the division of labour assigned to each, without touching in the least the question of jurisdiction. The reader has only to turn to the Acts of the Apostles¹, to see, that the conversion of the Gentiles was first revealed to Peter, and that he actually began to preach in consequence of the vision : and of Paul it is said², that he preached in the synagogues, and confounded the Jews. The division of labour therefore assigned to each, by no means entrenches on the supremacy of jurisdiction conferred on the head of the sacred college. 2. When St. Paul says, that he is burthened with the care of all the churches, he speaks of the general and ample commission given by Christ to *all his apostles to teach all nations* ; but he who gave this ample authority, by no means cancelled his own declarations, by which he constituted Peter the head. 3. When St. Paul says, that he is not inferior to any of the apostles, he evidently refers to his apostolic labours, which he had enumerated, and to the indefatigable zeal, which he had displayed. 4. If St. Paul withstood Peter in the instance referred to, the only inference to be drawn from the fact is, that a superior may with propriety be checked by an inferior in a matter of importance. This is the view which St. Augustine takes of this incident, in a long letter to

¹ Acts, x.² Ibid. ix. 20, 21, 22.

St. Jerom. "Est laus itaque justæ libertatis in Paulo et sanctæ humilitatis in Petro."—"Here," says this eminent father, "is exhibited the praise of a justifiable liberty in Paul, and a specimen of holy humility in Peter¹." 5. If Peter and John were sent to Samaria, that circumstance argues no inferiority on the part of the persons thus sent ; but proves only a confidential communication between the parties deliberating on a general concern. As to the account which St. Peter gives of his own conduct, he had to inform the ignorant, and to explain the nature of an extraordinary commission received from above. 6. With respect to the assertion, that both Peter and Paul were joint founders of the church of Rome, and that therefore no peculiar pre-eminence is due to Peter ; the fact is true in a general sense, but the inference is not justly drawn. It is assuredly agreeable to truth to affirm, that St. Paul co-operated with St. Peter in founding the church of Rome ; that he was connected with him by a cordial participation of his labours during life ; and that he was joined with him in death ; that consequently the names of these two illustrious apostles are frequently united. Though this is unquestionably a correct statement of the case, yet in no monument of Christian antiquity, is the See of Rome denominated *the See of Paul*

¹ St. Aug. Epist. ad Hier. 19, al. 81.

only; but in innumerable instances is it called the See of Peter. A pregnant proof this, that the association of the name of Paul with that of Peter, was *never* understood to impair that supremacy, which our Redeemer had conferred on the head of the sacred college¹.

If, as we have seen, Christ really conferred on St. Peter a substantial pre-eminence of honour and jurisdiction, by making him the corner-stone of his spiritual building, the transmission of this primacy to the successors of Peter, is no less founded in fact. Indeed, if our Redeemer judged it proper to appoint a head, in order to remove the occasion of disunion, agreeably to the doctrine of St. Jerom², the same reason not only subsists in its full force, during the subsequent ages of the church, but necessarily acquires tenfold weight. What was expedient during the period of fervour, when a general spirit of piety, humility, and religion prevailed, must be deemed altogether indispensable, when this spirit was relaxed.

If, in addition to these considerations, we are ever to view the church as essentially *one*; and if, for the preservation of this unity, our Re-

¹ See a most learned and an excellent dissertation on this subject by Melchior Inkhofer, ap. Leon. Allat. de Eccles. Occident et Orient. Perpet. Consens. lib. 1, c. vii. col. 136, et seq. edit. Colon. Agripp. 1648.

² Loc. cit.

deemer has thought proper to establish a certain form of ecclesiastical government; a real and substantial change of the form thus established, becomes an unlawful act, a fatal innovation.

The church is denominated by St. Paul one body: but to give it this appellation, without admitting a head, that is to connect and unite the various members of this mystical structure, is such an inconsistency, as will admit of no explanation in the system of our opponents. Did not the Almighty establish, under the Jewish dispensation, a high priest, who was to unfold the difficulties of the law, to maintain a supreme authority in spiritual concerns, to prevent confusion, and to consolidate union? and was there not a succession of supreme pontiffs, to carry into effect the same sublime purposes? And is the new law to be left destitute of the same resource? Is the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which was foretold in the most elevated strains of prophecy, as an establishment subsisting for ever, to be abandoned to the wayward fancy of individuals, without a head, a chief governor, a supreme pastor? This is neither agreeable to the dictates of common sense, to analogy, nor to the positive injunctions of the sacred Scripture.

That the successors of Peter have ever possessed, and lawfully exercised a primacy of honour and jurisdiction over the whole church of Christ, is a fact incontrovertibly clear from the

course of ecclesiastical history, from the undeniable authority of general councils, and from the unanimous consent of the whole church, recorded by undoubted and unexceptionable witnesses of tradition. The history of the popes, the successors of St. Peter, presents a spectacle to mankind, altogether unprecedented in the annals of the world. For near eighteen hundred years; whilst every country under the sun has exhibited incessant changes and continual fluctuation, both in the forms of government, and the variety of nations, who have held the sway; whilst England has been ruled successively by five different nations, and other countries of Europe have undergone vicissitudes as numerous; the apostolic See, the chair of Peter, has preserved an unbroken succession of pontiffs to the present day; a succession as regular as that of the kings of England from Edward the Confessor to his present Majesty. During the whole of this period, they have governed the church, superintended the observance of the canons, repressed abuses, decided controversies on subjects of faith, morality, and discipline, called councils, presided in them by their legates, subsequently sanctioned their proceedings, and have performed the duties of holy, active, and vigilant pastors. With every fair and indulgent allowance for human infirmity, we may safely assert, that this long and extended series of

eminent personages, exhibits such splendid instances of piety, talents, skill in the arts of government, profound learning, and general merit, as are not to be paralleled in the whole collection of civil governors, that ever appeared in the world. Some notorious exceptions are unquestionably to be found, by which this general commendation must receive some abatement; but those who consider, that a traitor was found in the college of the twelve apostles, will deem the number comparatively inconsiderable. For the first five hundred years, the sovereign pontiffs were eminently distinguished for their heroic sanctity; for the last three hundred years, they have rendered themselves eminent for piety, talents, and superior merit; and in every age many have been found, whose conduct no less than their station, has entitled them to the appellation of fathers of the faithful.

If we consult the earliest monuments of Christian antiquity, and ascertain the real doctrine of the church from her general councils, we cannot entertain a shadow of doubt, that the successors of Peter, filling the apostolic see of Rome, always exercised a real and efficient supremacy. Let the learned reader consult the Ecclesiastical History of the venerable Theodoret, and he will find a most remarkable letter, addressed by the second council, held at Constantinople in 381, to Pope Damasus, as well as to the bishops, whom

that pontiff had collected together. In this address, the fathers of the council roundly declare, that they assembled in consequence of a requisition, addressed to them by the Apostolic See, through the medium of the Emperor, and they *acknowledge the summons as addressed to members belonging to their head*¹.

Another fact of the same description is, that St. Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, presided in the third general council, held at Ephesus, in 431, as vicar of Pope Celestine; and the fathers of that council expressly declare, that they proceed with pain to the condemnation of Nestorius, by virtue of the canons and the injunctions contained in the letters of that pontiff². These two events, which took place in a most flourishing period of Christianity, demand no comment; they loudly proclaim the existence of that power, which, to the everlasting infamy of Britain, is so ignorantly, so indelicately, and so impiously blasphemed by persons of every description.

These remarkable documents, which may be deemed sufficiently strong, are exceeded by the proceedings, which took place in the council of Chalcedon, in 451. That great assembly was convened principally for the purpose of condemn-

¹ See this remarkable document, Hist. Eccles. Theodoret, lib. 5, c. ix:—Καὶ ἡμᾶς ὡς οἰκεῖα μέλη Προσεκαλέσασθε, &c.

² See Evagr. Hist. Eccles. lib. 1, c. iv. edit. Vales. tom. iii. p. 259, 260.

ing the Eutychian heresy, and of punishing the flagrant and notorious crimes of Dioscorus, the wicked patriarch of Alexandria. At this great council presided St. Leo the Great, the pope at that period, in the persons of his three legates, Paschasinus, bishop of Lilybæum, Luçentius, bishop of Ascoli, and Boniface, a priest of Rome. Here, with the perfect acquiescence of the council, the Pope is styled the Bishop of Rome, *the head of all churches*; his supremacy is unequivocally acknowledged by the whole proceedings of the synod; his legates bring forward the charges against Dioscorus; and one head of accusation is, that he had presumed to call a council, without the authority of the Roman pontiff; which, it was alleged, *never was done, and never can be done*; Dioscorus, at the motion of the legates, is dismissed from the council as a judge, in order afterwards to appear by citation. The proceedings are then amply discussed, and a sentence of condemnation against Dioscorus is pronounced by the legates in the name of the pope and the council. After the recital of the crimes of the accused party, the sentence is closed in the following terms: “ Whence Leo, the most holy Archbishop of Great Rome, by us and by the present council, together with St. Peter, the apostle, who is the rock and foundation of the Catholic church, and the pillar of the orthodox faith, hath stripped him

of his episcopal dignity, and of every sacerdotal ministry." This sentence was adopted by the council, and received the subsequent sanction of the holy pontiff, at the request of the fathers, who tell him, that *he had presided over them as the head over its members*¹. Here the catechist and his friends may safely be challenged to produce any facts more appropriate to sustain any argument, or carrying more weight by their decisive evidence in the whole compass of history. I will only add, that all these councils are received by the Church of England².

The language of every council ever held in the Catholic church is in perfect unison with these proceedings of the synod of Chalcedon. But not to tire the reader with superfluous evidence, I will content myself with supplying the declaration of the council of Florence on the subject. The decision of this council, held in 1439, will probably have more weight at this period of time, as it was framed on the reunion of the Greek and Latin churches. The decree is expressed in the following terms: "WE DEFINE that the holy Roman See, and the Roman Pontiff holds the primacy over the whole world; and that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of St. Peter,

¹ See Conc. tom. iv. also Carranza, Act. i. ii. iii. fol. 140—145; Cabassut. Notit. Eccles. Sæc. v. p. 214, et seq.; Fleury, b. 28; Mr. Butler, St. Leo's Life, April 11.

² 1 Eliz. c. i.

prince of the apostles, and true vicar of Christ, and the head of the whole church, and the father and doctor of Christians ; and that to him, in St. Peter, was given by our Lord Jesus Christ, a full power to feed, rule and govern the universal church, as appears from the proceedings of general councils and holy canons. Given at Florence, in a synodal public session, in the year 1439¹."

In addition to documents so clear and decisive on this subject, it would be easy to collect a volume of evidence no less convincing both from the Greek and Latin fathers, the legitimate and authorised witnesses of tradition. But to what purpose are we to trespass on the patience of the reader, when the centuriators of Magdeburg have *kindly* performed the work. Those rigid partisans of Protestantism, have, in their motley performance, undertaken to vent their rancour and spleen against both the Greek and Latin fathers, for constantly supporting the supremacy of the apostolic see. As this is a sure and unequivocal acknowledgment of the point under consideration, it becomes altogether unnecessary to search for further evidence from this source².

Perhaps the English reader may wish to hear

¹ See Carranza, fol. 351.

² See Cent. iii. col. 84, 85 ; Cent. iv. col. 125, 555, 556, 558 ; Cent. v. col. 774, 777, 778, 779, 781, 783.

the opinion of a writer, whose name may be more familiar to him, than the centuriators of Magdeburg. Let Bucer therefore step forth with his tale, the man who was called over to England to assist Cranmer in forming the Anglican church. "We confess," says this writer, "that in the opinion of the ancient fathers, *the Roman church did hold the primacy, having the chair of Peter, and that her bishops have been accounted his successors*¹." This is a fair and candid acknowledgment, which, coming from such a man as Bucer, should have great weight in the Protestant world.

But as two witnesses of unexceptionable credit, usually establish a fact in a very satisfactory manner, let us hear the evidence of Blondel on the subject, a Protestant divine, who for skill in languages, and an intimate acquaintance with history, civil and ecclesiastical, stands unrivalled among his brethren. "*Rome*," says he, "*being a church, consecrated by the residence of St. Peter, whom antiquity acknowledged as the head of the Apostolic college, and honoured as the See of Peter*, might easily have been considered by one of the most renowned councils, (that of Chalcedon) as head of the church²." Such is the admission of Blondel, and such is the language of those Protestants, whose learning rendered familiar facts, which bigotry cannot disavow.

¹ Bucer, Prep. ad Conc. ² Blondel on the Supremacy, p. 107.

If the catechist and his friends require any farther confirmation of the supremacy of the chief pastor of the Catholic church, I beg their attention to the three following considerations. First, whenever any bishop, in any part of the Catholic world, has felt himself aggrieved by the proceedings of a national or provincial synod, recourse has invariably been had to Rome. Thus the great St. John Chrysostom appealed to the authority of Innocent the First, from the unjust decisions of his adversaries ; St. Flavian, the venerable patriarch of Antioch, resorted to the jurisdiction of St. Leo the Great, under similar circumstances ; about the same time, Chelidonius, bishop of Besançon, who had been deposed by St. Hilary of Arles, recurred to the same tribunal. In all these instances, the cases submitted to the Holy See were carefully investigated, and judicially discussed ; and ample justice was done to the contending parties. Ecclesiastical history is full of similar appeals, when the adverse parties manifested the most perfect acquiescence in the authority and equity of the judge. Secondly, let the catechist reflect, that in all controversies relating to faith, the party adhering to the Apostolic See, has ever been accounted orthodox ; the party dissenting from the supreme pastor, has, in every instance, been reputed heretical or schismatical. "I am associated in communion with your Holiness, that is, with the chair of Peter," exclaims St. Jerom, in his

celebrated letter to Pope Damasus: "I know the church to be built upon that rock: whoever eats the lamb out of that house is profane." And again, "I know not Vitalis, I reject Meletius, I am ignorant of Paulinus. Whoever does not gather with you, scatters; that is, he who does not belong to Christ, is a follower of antichrist¹." Thirdly, let the catechist remember, that nothing has ever been defined in the church relating to faith, without the consent, or the subsequent sanction of the Pope, as the supreme pastor. Surely this must be considered as a standing monument, a practical confirmation of the belief of the church on this subject.

To all this overwhelming weight of reason and authority, what says the *learned* catechist?

1. He alleges, that there is no authority in Scripture for the prerogatives of the Church of Rome. To this, it may be obviously and rationally replied, that there are many, very many points necessarily observed, which are not warranted by any text of Scripture. The Sunday, or the first day of the week, is to be kept holy; and this duty is universally regarded as a matter of conscientious obligation: yet the practice, so

¹ "Beatitudini tuæ, id est, cathedræ Petri, communionē cōsocior; super illam petram ædificatam ecclesiam scio: quicumque extra hanc domum agnum comederit, prophanus est. . . . Non novi Vitalem, Meletium respuo, ignoro Paulinum. Quicumque tecum non colligit, spargit, hoc est, qui Christi non est, antichristi est."—*Epist. St. Hier. lib. i. Epis. 25, edit. Camis. fol. 21, Lovan. 1581.*

far from being warranted by Scripture, is expressly repugnant to the letter of the divine law, which directs the Jewish sabbath, or the Saturday, to be sanctified. By a decree, dictated by the Holy Ghost, it is enjoined to all Christians, to abstain from blood¹; and still the catechist and his friends make no difficulty of violating, in their ordinary repasts, a law so solemnly published. There is also a clear distinction made by them, between the dignity of a primate and his suffragans, and between a bishop and a priest; now will this gentle and learned writer, who, in his authorised translation of the Scripture, hears nothing on this matter, but of *overseers* and elders, have the wonderful condescension to explain the *Scriptural* grounds, on which he admits a regularly established hierarchy. If he cannot justify his practice by the authority of Scripture, let him cease to arraign the conduct of the Catholic, who, besides Scripture, admits an *unwritten* rule of faith, as well as a competent tribunal, divinely established, to propound, explain, and enforce this rule. Besides, if the preceding pages be read with attention, it will appear how far the appointment of a head of the church, a supreme pastor, is founded on the sacred text.

II. Then it seems, that this superiority is nothing but usurpation, as has been proved by

¹ Acts, xv. 28, 29.

Protestant divines. O wonderful discovery ! O unparalleled sagacity ! Observe the nature and consistency of this singular assertion. The family of his present Majesty has been seated on the British throne, just one hundred and eleven years : the title at first was by many deemed questionable, and much blood was shed in supporting the claim. At the present period, however, not a shadow of doubt is entertained on the subject : his present Majesty reigns in the hearts of his subjects, and no one, either waking or sleeping, thinks of contesting his title. The present Pontiff and his predecessors have been seated on the pontifical throne for eighteen hundred years, not by a questionable title, but by the full and free consent of the whole Catholic church, and yet this acknowledged superiority is, by the consistent logic of the catechist, termed usurpation !!!

Risum teneatis amici.

Hor.

Who will not laugh such wretched trash to hear?

Again, let me ask the catechist to read with attention the preceding observations, and he will discover, perhaps with pain, that what he has thought proper to term usurpation, proves to be legitimate authority.

III. Then it is said, that the Asiatic and African churches formerly rejected the authority of the Apostolic See, as is evident from history. I

reply, that precisely the contrary is evident from every historical monument now extant. There is no doubt that the catechist alludes to the celebrated discussion about the time of keeping Easter, between some churches in Asia and Pope Victor; as also to the memorable controversy between some African prelates and Pope Stephen, on the subject of re-baptizing heretics. Now both these events, instead of proving a denial of the pontifical authority, clearly evince the contrary to be the fact. :

The Asiatic churches had, for a considerable time, kept the feast of Easter, on the fourteenth day of the moon of March, on whatever day of the week it might fall: the Roman Church had invariably kept it on the Sunday following the fourteenth day. The Asiatics were certainly attached to their custom beyond the usual bounds of discretion; and Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, who took a leading part in the discussion, wrote to Pope Victor a strong letter, preserved by Eusebius, which certainly does not, in every part, contain the most measured terms. Pope Victor, finding the parties refractory, employed the sword of excommunication; the sentence, however, was never executed; for by the timely and urgent interposition of St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, the whole affair was compromised, to the satisfaction of the parties. This is the substance of the account given by Eusebius; and

from this it appears that in no part of the dispute was the authority of the pontiff called in question: the circumstances, on the contrary, proclaim aloud the acknowledged existence of the pontifical power¹.

A similar heat was manifested by certain African bishops, on the subject of re-baptizing heretics, on the ground that the baptism given out of the church was to be deemed invalid. This opinion was maintained with considerable violence by many prelates; among whom St. Cyprian and Firmitian were particularly distinguished. Many angry discussions were held on the subject; but Pope Stephen, though he insisted on a strict adherence to the practice of antiquity, yet, by the advice of St. Dionysius of Alexandria, was restrained from employing severe and decisive measures². The affair gradually died away, or in the language of Vincent of Lerins—"retenta est antiquitas; explosa est novitas"—"Antiquity kept its place; novelty was exploded." In the whole progress of this dispute, not a sentence was uttered which amounted to a denial of the pontifical power.

IV. The catechist well knows that the Eastern churches, of which he speaks with applause, were, for the space of nearly nine hundred years, subject to the authority, and acknowledged the jurisdiction of the see of Rome; and that human

¹ Eus. Hist. lib. v. c. 23, 24, 25.

² Ibid. lib. vii. c. 5, 6, 7.

motives, and human passions, occasioned the grand schism. If such motives, in the estimation of the catechist, are sufficient to justify the most important changes in religion, let him, if he pleases, continue to applaud the conduct of the Eastern churches; but if reason and religion both imperatively direct us to respect the authority established by Christ, my opponent will pause, before he draws any argument from the conduct of the Greek church.

V. Equally insignificant and destitute of truth are his observations on the Church of England, when he states that the apostolic see can have no authority over her; that she was a free church from the beginning; and that, notwithstanding the oppressions of the Roman see, she still justly maintains her natural freedom. Is the catechist so unacquainted with the history of religion in his own country, as not to know that England derived all her knowledge of Christianity from the exertions of the see of Rome; that the first well-authenticated conversion of our British ancestors took place during the pontificate of Pope Eleutherius, who sent his zealous and active missionaries to achieve the grand work? If this fact has never been learned by him, he cannot be so great a stranger to historical research as not to know, that the memorable conversion of our Saxon ancestors is to be ascribed to the zeal of Pope Gregory I., known in the church by the distinguished appellation of St. Gregory the Great,

who dispatched St. Augustine, and his pious associates, on this important business, in 596 ; that they succeeded in diffusing the light of faith ; and that the whole country finally became a most flourishing portion of the church ; an island of saints. From that era to the period called the Reformation, the Pope was here considered as the father of the faithful. His jurisdiction was acknowledged ; his authority remained undisputed. Amidst all attempts of the pontiffs to correct various abuses, and during the angry discussions under the arbitrary and tyrannical sway of the Conqueror, or his immediate descendants ; or when the pride, passion, and violence of the first of the Plantagenets hurried him to the most unwarrantable proceedings ; at these critical periods, the spiritual claims of the Pontiffs were never questioned, but maintained in their full force. This state of things continued for a term of about nine hundred years ; till Henry VIII., for reasons and under circumstances, with which the reader is well acquainted, threw off the yoke, and placed the tiara on his own head. It is a matter of public notoriety, that neither reason nor religion suggested this measure, but that pride, avarice, and lust, gave an impulse to the whole proceeding. Let the catechist then boast of the freedom of his church, if he can prove such a boast to be justifiable ; but let him reflect, that both reason and

religion should lead him to make the most heartfelt acknowledgments to the piety and zeal of the apostolic see, from which the light of Christianity, with its attendant blessings, has been, under heaven, derived ¹.

¹ See a learned Treatise on the Three Conversions of England, by F. Parsons ; London, 1688. On the grand Conversion of the Saxons : 'see Bede, i. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, et seq.

QUESTION XVIII.

Doth the Church of Rome differ from the Church of England
in any other point ?

ANSWER.

Yes ; for she holds,

1. That the Public Prayers or Service of the Church, at which people are bound to assist, may lawfully be performed in Latin, or a tongue not understood by the People.
2. That Auricular Confession, or confessing all our mortal sins, with the circumstances of them, in the ear of a Priest, is necessary to Salvation.
3. That Extreme Unction is a necessary Sacrament.
4. That it is unlawful for Priests and Clergymen to marry.
5. That the Church of Rome is infallible.
6. That the Scripture ought not to be read in the vulgar tongue by the common people.
7. That the Books commonly called Apocrypha are canonical Scripture.
8. That the Church of England had no power to reform herself.

OBSERVATIONS.

HAVING explained the grounds of the Catholic doctrine on the preceding questions, with clearness and precision, and either obviated or refuted the objections of the catechist, I here pledge myself to remove, by the divine assistance, every difficulty produced by any opponent, on the other subjects of discussion.

QUESTION XIX.

Why do you not allow of public prayer and services in Latin,
or a tongue not understood by the people?

ANSWER.

1. Because St. Paul, in the 14th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, disputes against such service, shewing that it edifies not, ver. 5, 6. That it is speaking into the air, ver. 9. That it is to be a Barbarian to the people, ver. 11. That it is a childish thing, ver. 20, nay, madness, ver. 23.
2. Not only the Jewish, but the Primitive churches had their public offices in the vulgar language.
3. The unwarrantableness of the thing is so manifest, that even the wiser men of the Roman church find fault with the public service in an unknown tongue.
4. It is against the natural sense of mankind, who think it is fit for them to know what they do, especially in the worship of God.
5. Though people may say their own prayers upon such occasions, yet the end and design of public prayer is lost, which is to join with the priest, or minister, and the congregation in the public devotions, and to say Amen to them.
6. The reasons they give for the use of this service in the Roman church, are so weak and worldly too, that they betray their guilt and error; as being drawn from the majesty of the Latin language, from the priest's being able to read his office in all countries; and the people's greater veneration of what they understand not, &c.

OBSERVATIONS.

MUCH and undeserved obloquy has been heaped on the Catholic church, for retaining the use of

a language, unknown to the people, in the public liturgy. It is roundly asserted to be the intention of the church to keep the vulgar in profound ignorance, and to deprive them of the comfort and benefit of public prayer. But surely, if these pretenders to propriety were to give themselves the trouble to examine the authorized directions given to the pastors, and to ascertain the real spirit with which the old discipline is maintained, they would be led to withdraw their objections to an ancient and venerable practice.

That it is the design of the Catholic church to keep the people in ignorance, and to withhold from them the light of instruction, cannot for a moment be supposed, when we consider the unremitting zeal, with which the pastors of the church are cautioned and warned to afford to their flocks the sacred food of the holy Scriptures, and to furnish a clear exposition of all that regards the administration of the sacraments, together with every other point connected with religion¹. If such a base purpose, as is imputed to the church by her adversaries, really had an existence, we should not witness these directions so forcibly and so repeatedly made. Let the catechist compare the regular and systematic mode of conveying instruction to the people, pursued by Catholic pastors, with the feeble and

¹ Conc. Trid, sess. 24 de Reform. c. iv. et vii.

desultory efforts of the same description made by Protestant guides, and he will soon discover, that we need not dread the comparison. He will speedily be convinced, that the charge of designedly keeping the people in ignorance, is invented by malice, and propagated by credulity.

If the catechist should ask, why the Catholic church, in defiance of the clamours of her enemies, should still persist in having the service in an unknown tongue, we reply, that, as the sacrifice of the mass, the pure oblation pointed out by the Prophet Malachi, was to be offered in every place under the sun, and to connect all Christians in the profession of the same faith, it was thought highly advantageous, as a point of discipline, to extend the same unity and stability to the worship. A sacrifice, common to the whole church of Christ, is best preserved and perpetuated by a general uniformity of rite ; and where this cannot be effected to the utmost extent, all unnecessary deviations are to be avoided.

Neither can it be asserted, that it is in any manner necessary, that the sacrifice should be offered in a language understood by the people. It becomes only requisite, that they should completely apprehend the nature of the action performed, and unite their devotion with that of the priest. This they are enabled to do by the constant instructions given by their pastors ; by the nature of the sacrifice so repeatedly ex-

plained ; by the translation of the liturgy in the hands of the people ; and by prayers corresponding to every part of the great action. The prayers said by the priest at the altar belong professionally to his sacerdotal office ; and it becomes in no manner necessary, or even proper, that the laity should recite the same, and consequently that they should understand the language in which they are conveyed.

Had the faithful Christian, who assists at the sacrifice of the mass, attended the crucifixion of his Redeemer, and witnessed his pure and disinterested love in shedding his blood for all mankind, it would have been wholly unnecessary to have understood his language, or the language of his bloody and unrelenting foes. And if we have the same sacred tragedy acted repeatedly on millions of altars in an unbloody manner, is it necessary to understand the language in which the offering is made ? Are not our minds sufficiently enlightened on the subject ? Are not our wills animated and inflamed with love, at the sight of that real and efficient token of divine benevolence ? Do not our hearts glow with all the fire of devotion, when we behold the Lord lying a victim on the altar ; the priest leaning over the sacrifice, the people around praying in silent supplication. Do we then think of the language, in which the offering is made ? Do we not rather leave to the priest the care of reciting

his own prayers, and of performing all the rites connected with his office, while, with the most enraptured devotion, we endeavour to join in the sacred action? While we labour to unite our mean efforts in offering our best adorations to God; in making a just and natural return for all his favours; in averting his anger, and in obtaining his blessing? All this, it is perfectly clear, may be accomplished without understanding the language of the priest; especially when we consider the perpetual injunctions given to the pastors, to explain the nature of the sacrifice, and the sublime ends for which it is offered.

If the catechist wishes to hear more on the subject, let him reflect, that the language in which the divine service is performed, is a mere matter of discipline, not of faith; and that in regulating concerns of this nature, the church is guided by motives of prudence and expediency. Let him remember, that the Greek and Latin tongues, in which principally the public liturgies have been preserved, are now fixed, and not subject to the fluctuations experienced by living languages; and that the church is not willing to expose its service to the constant changes of arbitrary and fleeting sounds. This disposition is by no means novel in the history of mankind. During the whole period, which elapsed from the Babylonish captivity to the coming of our Redeemer, the public service

continued to be performed in the ancient Hebrew, not then understood by the common people; and our Lord and his devout friends, instead of blaming the practice, sanctioned it by their presence¹. The Greek church retains its ancient language in its public liturgy, though that of the people is widely different. This is reluctantly acknowledged by Mosheim, who owns that the language of the divine service is absolutely unintelligible to the multitude². What will the catechist say, when the argument is brought home to himself, by the conduct pursued by the founders of the Anglican church? It is recorded by Dr. Heylin, that, when the new liturgy was sent over to Ireland, and afterwards to Wales, no precaution was taken to translate it into the language understood by the people; "and thus," adds this writer, "we have furnished the Papists with an excellent argument against ourselves, for having the divine service celebrated in such a language as the people do not understand³." Will the good and benignant catechist, in the plenitude of his condescension, favour the Catholic church with his leave to pursue that conduct, of which the pious founders of his immaculate

¹ Walton Præf. Polyglott.

² Mosheim: edit. Maclaine, Cent. 11. Part 2, c. iv. Vol. ii. p. 575.

³ Heylin Hist. ann. Reg. Eliz. ii. 1560, p. 128, edit. London, 1661.

establishment have left so distinguished an example? But let us impartially consider the specific reasons adduced by him on the subject.

I. The objections here made by the catechist from St. Paul, though often repeated very ostentatiously by his friends, merit the highest reprehension, for attempting to disfigure and obscure a plain passage of that apostle. Let the reader turn to the 14th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and he will readily perceive, that the apostle is not speaking a single word of a public authorized liturgy, translated for the use of the people, and carefully expounded by the pastors ; for such is the liturgy used in the Catholic church : the severe epithets here employed by St. Paul, regard only a private and ostentatious display of the gift of tongues, exhibited by individuals, who were rather pleased pompously to manifest a supernatural favour to excite admiration, than to expound the mysteries of faith for edification. The censure of St. Paul is, therefore, to be directed, not against the Catholic church, which enjoins her liturgy to be expounded to the people, but against the founders of what is called reform, who, without the same prudent precaution, ordered prayers to be read to the Irish and Welsh in an unknown tongue.

II. If the primitive Christians had the service in the vulgar tongue, the reason is obvious : the

Greek and Latin languages prevailed throughout the greatest part of the known world. If other languages have been formed out of them, with a heterogeneous mixture of barbarous dialects, that surely is not a reason to induce the church to alter its liturgy with the ever-shifting forms of human speech. As to the practice of the Jews, let the catechist again be admonished, that from the Babylonish captivity to the coming of Christ, they, by his connivance and the sanction of his presence, had their service, not in the vulgar tongue, but in the ancient Hebrew¹.

III. When the catechist asserts, that the practice of the Catholic church is so unwarrantable, as to call for the blame *of the wisest of her members*, I positively charge him with stating *what is not true*.

IV. When he affirms, that the people ought to know what they do in the worship of God, I reply that this end is fully accomplished by the directions given to the pastors of the church on the subject².

V. The same remark is a complete answer to the difficulties contained in the fifth number.

VI. The reasons given for the practice are found in the preceding observations; and instead of betraying either guilt or error, as the

¹ See the preceding observations.

² See again the preceding observations.

catechist injuriously affirms, they will be found to be replete with sense and discretion, and agreeable to the discipline of the Jews, in the days of our Redemer, who by his presence gave weight to the established custom.

QUESTION XX.

Why do not you think Auricular Confession to a Priest necessary to salvation ?

ANSWER.

We are not against confessing to a minister, in the church of England ; nay, our church presses it, both public and private, to God chiefly, and to a pious and able divine, if the conscience be burdened, and particularly upon a sick or death-bed, and before receiving the Sacrament ; but we dare not say, as they do in the church of Rome, that a man cannot be pardoned or saved, except he confesses to a priest all his mortal sins, with their circumstances, for these reasons,

1. Because there is nothing in the word of God that makes the neglect of such a confession damnable.
2. The word of God tells us, that God forgives sins upon true contrition, but says nothing of confession to a priest, that it is always to attend contrition.
3. Though confession was used in the primitive church, yet that confession was made by scandalous sinners in the public congregation, and therefore is not the same with that practised this day in the Roman church.
4. They make this confession a Sacrament, or a principal part of the Sacrament of Penance, in the church of Rome ; but a Sacrament it cannot be, because it wants Christ's institution.
5. About six hundred years ago, this confession was not thought necessary to salvation, even in the church of Rome, and there is no inspiration since to make it so.
6. The place, John xx. 23, upon which the stress of the necessity of this confession is laid, imports no such thing. Confession is not so much as mentioned there.
7. This confession, as it is managed in the church of Rome, is a mere formality, but gives no check to sin.

OBSERVATIONS.

IN treating the subject of confession, the catechist appears to labour under the pressure of contradictory and jarring ideas. The leading object of the question is to prove that confession is not necessary to salvation ; still he has no objection to the practice, however painful and humiliating to nature : on one side, he disdains the ministry of the Catholic priest, who derives his authority from those, that can prove their connexion with Christ and his apostles ; while, on the other, he accepts the services of a minister of the Anglican church, who can trace his connexion no higher than to the civil power of the realm. As an obedient member of the church of England, he must also admit, that *our Lord Jesus Christ hath left power in his church to absolve all sinners who truly repent* ; he must consequently acknowledge the validity of the absolution pronounced by the minister over the sick person, who has made a confession ; yet with a glorious inconsistency, which sets even ridicule at defiance, he is obliged to believe, at least exteriorly to profess, that penance, including confession, is not a sacrament grounded upon divine authority, but a mere ceremony, an unavailing formality, which may be omitted at pleasure¹.

¹ Compare the Visitation of the Sick, in the Common Prayer Book, with the 25th Article.

That penance is a sacrament we have already shown, when we demonstrated the existence of seven sacraments; and of this no rational inquirer can entertain a doubt, even from the admission recorded in the book of Common Prayer. It is there solemnly asserted¹, that our Redeemer has left in his church a power of remitting sin by the ministry of the priest, who pronounces the words of absolution over the repenting sinner. Now such an admission is a clear acknowledgment of the existence of penance as a sacrament. For what understand we by a sacrament, but a sacred sign, or an external rite, to which internal grace is annexed, by the positive institution of Christ himself? To admit, therefore, the remission of sin by the ministry of the priest, and at the same time to deny the existence of the sacrament, by which sin is so remitted, forms such a palpable contradiction, as the ingenuity of man can never unravel.

That the confession of sin to a priest forms an essential part of this sacrament, is demonstratively evident from its very nature and properties, and from the terms in which it is established. We have only to recur to the mode, in which our Redeemer conveyed the knowledge of this celebrated institution: He first promised to establish a method of opening the kingdom of Heaven to those,

¹ Loc. cit.

who would otherwise have been excluded by their crimes ; and then he gradually proceeded to the performance of the promise thus deliberately given. He said to Peter¹, *I will give unto thee the KEYS of the kingdom of Heaven ; and WHATSOEVER thou shalt BIND on earth, shall be BOUND in Heaven ; and WHATSOEVER thou shalt LOOSE on earth, shall be LOOSED in Heaven.* And again, to all the Apostles : *VERILY I say unto you, WHATSOEVER you shall BIND on earth, shall be BOUND in Heaven ; and WHATSOEVER you shall LOOSE on earth, shall be LOOSED in Heaven*². After his resurrection, he redeemed this solemn pledge in the following manner : *As my Father hath SENT me, even so I SEND you. And when he had said this, he breathed upon them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : WHOSOEVER sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and WHOSOEVER sins ye retain, they are retained*³. Here our Redeemer, by the force of the grant, evidently constitutes his apostles, and consequently their lawful successors in the sacred ministry, physicians, to heal the wounds of sin, and judges, to pronounce on the cases that came under their cognizance. He does not, absolutely and without any restriction, direct them indiscriminately to absolve all sinners, without attention to their dispositions. The minister of Christ must provide

¹ Matt. xvi. 19.² Matt. xviii. 18.³ John xx. 22, 23.

suitable remedies, analogous to the spiritual wants of his penitents ; he must suggest means by which depraved habits may be overcome, relapses may be prevented, and every obstacle to divine grace may be removed. By the nature of his office, established by this commission, he must, by a judicial act, determine WHO are to be BOUND, and WHO are to be LOOSED. Now let me ask the catechist, with a triumphant decision, which nothing under heaven can repress, how is all this to be accomplished without the use of confession ? How is a physician to administer to the spiritual wants of his patient, unless these wants be revealed to him by the party concerned ? How is the judge to pass sentence, either of BINDING or LOOSING, without a knowledge of the cause, derived from the manifestation of the culprit ? There is no possible mode, open to the ingenuity of man, of carrying into effect the institution of Christ in this most momentous concern, but that which arises from the voluntary, humble, plain, entire, and submissive declaration of the penitent. Hence St. John, evidently alluding to the distinct remedy instituted by Christ for forgiving sin after baptism, and addressing himself to those who had been baptised, has these remarkable words : *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we CONFESS our sins, he is FAITHFUL and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteous-*

ness¹. If the passage be compared with the direction of St. James², *Confess your faults one to another*, for the obvious purpose of being forgiven, there will remain no doubt whatever that auricular confession was considered by the apostles as the regular and necessary mode, instituted by Christ, in order to obtain the remission of sin.

Here the catechist may possibly exclaim, I admit confession, but that kind only which consists in confessing to God alone, by true contrition, or, in the language of David, with a contrite and humble heart, which God will not despise. The reply to this trite objection is extremely simple and obvious. A real and sincere sorrow for past sin, with a full determination of not sinning in future, is an indispensable step to obtain a reconciliation with God ; but yet this is not all that is required. The same holy dispositions are required in an adult before baptism ; still that sacrament becomes necessary to salvation, because it is written, *Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*³. In the same manner, a sincere sorrow, including a full and effectual resolution of avoiding all sin, and all the occasions of sin, is a previous disposition to confession, though it does not assuredly

¹ 1 John, i. 8, 9.

² James, v. 16.

³ John, iii. 5.

supersede its use. In fact, how can this power of forgiving sin, which my opponent admits to have been left by Christ to his church, be brought into operation, if the practice of confession be rejected? How is the minister to **BIND** or to **LOOSE**, according to the circumstances of the case, but by a knowledge of the state of his penitent, derived from his voluntary declaration? The duty of confession is, therefore, so intimately connected with the clear commission given by Christ to forgive sin, that their union must be pronounced to be inseparable and indissoluble.

This clear reply to an objection so ostentatiously produced by the catechist and his friends, I beg leave to confirm by the authority of the illustrious St. Augustine ; who, let it be remembered, closed a long life in the year 430. This holy father, after specifying sins which are deemed mortal or deadly, thus expresses himself : “ Do penance in such a manner, as penance is done in the church ; that the church may pray for you. Let no one say to himself, I secretly do penance ; I do penance before God : God, who pardons me, knows that I do it in my heart. Therefore it has been said without effect : **WHATSOEVER** shall be **LOOSED** on earth, shall be **LOOSED** in Heaven. Without effect, therefore, have the keys been given to the church. Do we set at nought the gospel of God? do we cancel the

words of Christ ? Do we promise to you, what he refuses ¹?" This decisive authority of St. Augustine clearly holds up to view the practice of the church at a bright era, of which that great father was a distinguished ornament, and as clearly overturns all the wretched sophistry, subterfuges, evasions, and inconsistencies, which are adopted by the catechist and his friends, on this most momentous affair.

If the catechist would wish to see a more ancient authority than that of St. Augustine, let him read the work of Tertullian on Penance, and particularly the tenth chapter, where, speaking of those who delay the manifestation of their crimes in the order of doing penance, he represents them as persons *consulting their feelings rather than their salvation* ; and compares them to those who labour under some concealed disorder, and from fear of disclosing it to a physician, perish from an untoward bashfulness. On this interesting point he exclaims: "If we conceal any thing from the knowledge of man,

¹ St. Aug. 49, Hom. in Verb. Apost. Legat. fungimur, &c. p. 181. tom. 10. edit. Colon. Agripp. 1616. Vid. etiam de pœnitent. Dist. Can. agite. Agite pœnitentiam, qualis agitur in Ecclesiâ, ut oret pro vobis ecclesia. Nemo sibi dicat, occulte ago, apud Deum ago : Novit Deus, qui mihi ignoscit, quia in corde ago. Ergo sine causâ dictum est, quæ solveritis in terrâ, soluta erunt in cœlo ? Ergo sine causâ sunt claves datæ Ecclesiæ Dei ? Frustramus Evangelium Dei ? Frustramus verba Christi ? Promisimus vobis quod ille negat ?

shall we hide it from God? Is it thus that the opinion of men and the omniscience of the Deity are placed in opposite scales? *Is it better thus to remain concealed in a state of damnation, than openly to be absolved?* That is truly a wretched mode of making a confession"¹. Here Tertullian evidently speaks of confession as necessary to salvation; and, as an essential preparation, to be juridically absolved by the priest. He confines it not to the declaration of public crimes, which, by the discipline of that age, were visited with public pains and penalties; but extends to those *secret transgressions*, where shame prevents disclosure.

A short period after this, St. Cyprian speaks of the discipline of the same age, on this subject, in such a manner as to preclude all doubt. In his celebrated treatise *On the Lapsed*, he labours to induce sinners to declare not only their public and avowed crimes, but even *their sins of thought, the secret designs of their hearts*; and, in pursuing this direction, he says: "He (God) sees the hearts of each, and will pass sentence *not only on actions, but on our words and our thoughts*. He beholds the minds and wills of all mankind,

¹ Tertull. de Pœnitent. c. 10. Videlicet si quid humanæ notitiæ subduxerimus, proinde et Deum celabimus? Adeone ex-istimatio hominum et Dei conscientia comparantur? *An melius est damnatum latere, quam palam absolvi.* Miserum est sic ad exomologesim pervenire.

existing in the concealment of an interior receptacle. Finally, in proportion as persons are more eminent for faith, and the fear of the Lord, though they may not be chargeable with the crime of offering sacrifices to idols, or of having procured attestations to that effect, *yet as they have thought of it, they confess this circumstance with grief and simplicity to the priests of God ; they make a confession of their conscience ; they unload their souls ; they seek a salutary remedy for their small and inconsiderable wounds, well knowing that it is written : God is not mocked*¹."

To this declaration of St. Cyprian in favour of private auricular confession, no rational objection can be made. For he clearly requires confession not only in the case of *public crimes*, which at that period were subjected to public penance, but he even demands the confession of transgressions comparatively inconsiderable, at the hazard of displeasing God. *Deus non irridetur*—God is not mocked. Accordingly, this and similar testimonies from the remotest antiquity, have had

¹ St. Cyprian de Lapsis, versus fin : denique quanto et fide majores et timore meliores sunt, qui quamvis nullo sacrificii aut libelli facinore constricti, quoniam tamen *de hoc vel cogitarunt, hoc ipsum apud sacerdotes Dei dolenter et simpliciter confitentes exomologesim conscientiae faciunt, animi sui pondus exponunt, salutarem medelam parvis licet et modicis exquirunt*, scientes esse scriptum, *Deus non irridetur*.

such an effect among many protestant divines, that they have fairly given up the point in debate. Instead, therefore, of accumulating a mass of evidence from the holy fathers of the church, I have only to treat my opponent with a few specimens of honesty and candour, in which the fathers of the established church have acknowledged the truth.

“It is confessed,” says the learned Bishop Montague, “*that all priests, and none but priests, have power to forgive sins ; that private confession is a very ancient practice in the church.* We urge it in extremes ; we require it in cases of perplexity¹.” This is a fair admission, but not more explicit than what is seen in the pages of Dove. “To advise,” says he, “the use of private confession to the priest, is no popish innovation, but agreeable to the constant practice of this church. And if any call it auricular, because private and in the priest’s ear, I know not why they should be condemned of popery².” It appears from these evidences, that the doctrine of the Catholic church and that of the Protestant establishment, may be considered to be in accordance on the subject ; except that the Catholic regards confession as a matter of strict and

¹ Gagger Gagged, p. 78, et seq.

² Dove’s Innovations unjustly charged, p. 557.

conscientious obligation, and adopts the practice through life ; while the free and high-minded Protestant treats the subject more lightly, and reserves the use of the remedy till that period, when various circumstances may render the application impracticable.

I have another quotation in store for the catechist ; and possibly its very explicit and satisfactory tone may occasion, in the nerves of my opponent, an unusual degree of irritation. " Our confession," says Dr. Sparrow, " must be *integra et perfecta*, not by halves ; all our sins must be confessed, *omnia venialia, omnia mortalia*. God blots out our sins ; true, but there is another confessor, that should not be neglected ; *he who would be sure of pardon*, let him find a priest, and make his humble confession to him, God having delegated priests his judges here on earth, and given them power of absolution, so that they can forgive the sins of those who humbly confess to them. Heaven awaits, and expects the priest's sentence here, and what the servant binds or looses, the Lord confirms in Heaven¹." After this clear and satisfactory evidence from the pens of Protestant divines of high rank and authority, what says the humble catechist ? The length of the preceding observations enables me to dispatch

¹ Bishop Sparrow's Sermon on Confession, p. 14, et seq.

his slender remarks in a manner altogether unceremonious.

I. The catechist says, "there is nothing in the word of God which makes the neglect of confession damnable." If the good catechist would deign to read the preceding observations with care, he will find that a power to remit sin, clearly expressed in the word of God, cannot be brought into action without confession. We are therefore constrained either to admit the practice of confession as the regular and necessary mode of ensuring the remission of sin, or openly to acknowledge that the power thus left in the church is nugatory, and to be abandoned to the caprice of the individual who seeks the remission of his sins. This latter intention the catechist assuredly will not impute to the wisdom of the Son of God. Besides, let the catechist deliberately compare the doctrine of Bishop Sparrow on this subject, with that of Tertullian and St. Cyprian, as recorded in the preceding observations, and he will probably be disposed to withdraw his groundless objections.

II. Again: he says, "that the word of God says nothing about confession to a priest, but only about contrition." If the word of God says nothing about confession to a priest, where does it justify the practice of confession to a parson? With what front, with what portion of decency,

can the catechist propose this objection, and at the same time maintain the doctrine expressed in the following part of the Book of Common Prayer. "Here shall the sick person be moved to *make a special confession of his sins*, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. *After which confession*, the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort : 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath *left power in the church to absolve all sinners who truly repent* and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences ; and *by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins*, in name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen*¹.'" Here let me propose to the catechist two questions, which truly are of difficult solution. How happens it, that the power of forgiving sin is left by Christ in the hands of the parson, whilst it is denied to the Catholic priest ? And, again : why is the practice of confession enforced by the minister of the Anglican church, when, according to the catechist, confession is not authorized by the Scripture ? In plain truth, error may be pardoned ; but artifice and inconsistency deserve to be held up to the glare of day.

III. Then the catechist affirms, that the confession used in the primitive church, was that made by scandalous sinners in public, but not au-

¹ The Visitation of the Sick—the Book of Common Prayer.

ricular confession. The catechist really appears as ignorant of Christian antiquity, as of every other branch of sacred learning. Let him therefore know, that the public penance used in the primitive church was imposed for *public and scandalous crimes only* ; certainly in no instance for sins of thought : which latter transgressions, as we learn from the authorities before cited, were a necessary matter of the sacrament¹.

IV. When the catechist denies that penance, of which confession forms a leading part, is a sacrament, because it wants Christ's institution, I content myself with asking him, by whose institution and order does the minister of his church, as we have seen, urge confession, grant absolution from sin, and thus claim the power of conferring a sacrament ? Let him give a clear explanation of this assumption of authority, and the claim of the Catholic church will be no longer with any consistency disputed.

V. The assertion contained in this corresponding number, will be found to convey a complete falsehood².

¹ Besides our decisive testimonies before produced, see Cardinal Bona, de Rebus Liturg. lib. ii. c. 1. The words of this learned writer deserve to be cited. Referring to St. Cyprian's words quoted above, from the treatise *on the Lapsed*, he adds : Quæ verba de secretâ et auriculari confessione intelligenda esse quis dubitet ? publicam enim de cogitationibus, deque modicis peccatis Ecclesia nunquam admisit.

² See the Observations.

VI. Again, I ask, if confession is not mentioned by St. John, xx. 23, why does the catechist approve the practice as adopted in the Book of Common Prayer?

VII. When the catechist says, "that confession, as it is managed in the church of Rome, is a mere formality, which gives no check to sin," he betrays a degree of profound ignorance, or wilful misrepresentation, which will ever be deemed inexcusable in a writer. The penitent who expects the benefit of absolution in the Roman Catholic church, must necessarily and indispensably manifest a hearty and sincere sorrow for past offences, with a firm determination of not sinning in future; he must make a clear, full, and humble confession of all deadly sins to his spiritual guide; if he has wronged his neighbour in any way, whether in his property, his honour, his reputation, or if he should have been accessory to any similar loss, he must either make immediate restitution to the best of his power, or give full security, that such restitution will not unnecessarily be delayed. Finally, he is pledged to lead a holy and penitential life, and to labour to satisfy the divine justice by the due performance of penitential works. Come now, catechist! thou man of superior wisdom, stand forth and tell me—is all this nothing, *vox et præterea nil*? Is this laborious

process a mere formality, unavailable in its nature and effects, to produce any fruit? Or will ignorance be pleaded in extenuation of a false statement? The first plea is inadmissible; the second insures infamy to a writer.

QUESTION XXI.

Why do you not believe that extreme unction is a sacrament necessary to salvation?

ANSWER.

1. It can be no sacrament, because it wants Christ's institution. The place, Mark vi. 13. is no institution of a sacrament, but a command to heal the sick miraculously.
2. Anointing the sick was a miraculous gift in the apostles' days, and therefore not necessary to be continued, after a sufficient promulgation of the gospel.
3. The unction they use in the church of Rome differs very much from the unction, or anointing with oil, St. James speaks of, chap. v. 14, 15. and the apostles used; for,
 1. That in the church of Rome hath no miraculous effects, which theirs had.
 2. The apostles anointed sick persons that they might recover. In the Roman church, they anoint dying persons that are past all hopes of recovery.
 3. We read of no such ceremonies used by the Apostles, as the Roman priests do use in their unction, anointing the eyes, and ears, and nose, and mouth, and hands, and feet, and reins, &c.
 4. Whereas spiritual grace is pretended to be conferred by this unction; it is evident, that in that place of St. James, the saving of the sick person is ascribed to the prayer of faith, not to the anointing.
 5. Whereas it is pretended, that it is fit there should be a sacrament for dying men, we say that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament sufficient to comfort a dying man, without extreme unction.

OBSERVATIONS.

WHEN the catechist proceeds to treat the question of extreme unction, he appears determined not to

see, though surrounded with the splendour of the noon-day sun. To throw confusion on the subject, he confounds the unction used by the apostles before their priesthood, mentioned by St. Mark¹, with the sacred rite recorded by St. James². The difference between the two practices is immense: the first indeed may be regarded as a prelude to the other; or as a rite, exhibiting a typical resemblance of what was afterwards to take place. But to confound them together is absolutely to mistake their nature and properties, and the general design for which they were instituted. The use of the oil mentioned by St. Mark, was evidently directed to remove *bodily disorders only*, and to carry into effect the designs of our Redeemer, when he imparted to his apostles the power of *healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease*³; and when he said⁴, *heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead*. Nothing sacramental is here mentioned, not even insinuated: in fact, the apostles were not invested with the character of the priesthood, when they performed these miraculous operations. They bestowed their favours promiscuously among the crowd, for the obvious purpose of ensuring credit to the Christian doctrine, and of diffusing the religion of their Mas-

¹ Mark vi. 13.

³ Matt. x. 1.

² James v. 14.

⁴ Ibid. x. 8.

ter among mankind. It does not appear that the persons thus healed were baptized; and, assuredly, without previous baptism, which is styled by theologians the gate of the sacraments, no sacramental rite can have a valid existence. The object, therefore, of these miraculous cures by the use of oil, cannot possibly be mistaken, but by those who are determined to cover the truth with a thick and dark mist of perplexity.

The sacred rite, recorded by St. James¹, is altogether of a different nature and description: and that it possesses the dignity of a sacrament of the new law, is a fact, supported by undeniable evidence. If we estimate the nature of a sacrament by the standard admitted by the catechist, we find it to be *an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordered by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and as a pledge to assure us thereof*². According to this authorized definition of a sacrament, three things are clearly requisite for its existence; first, that it be a visible rite or sign; secondly, that it confer an inward or spiritual grace; and, thirdly, that it be ordained by Christ. Now let me ask the theological catechist, which of these three conditions is wanting to make extreme unction a real sacrament? That it is an external sign, admits of no doubt:

¹ Loc. cit.

² Catechism, Book of Common Prayer.

that it confers an inward grace, is equally certain; for the remission of sin is annexed to this sacred rite: and such a promised grace, as this holy rite conveys, necessarily and undeniably implies the institution of Christ. For how could St. James, an apostle, a disciple perfectly instructed in the school of his Divine Master, and commissioned to teach the truth, pretend to annex the remission of sin, or a *real inward grace*, to an external sign, except by the order and institution of his divine preceptor? No man can confer grace, or annex it to any external rite, *but by an authority derived from Christ*. When, therefore, a holy apostle, lawfully sent, proclaims such an inward grace, combined with an outward sign, we justly, undeniably, and incontrovertibly infer his divine commission so to do. Unless this reasoning be admitted in its fullest extent, the word of an apostle must be deemed an empty sound.

It is still pertinaciously affirmed, I am aware, that this rite can regard bodily cures only; because it is said, that the Lord will raise up the sick man: then it is added, that if a spiritual grace be admitted as promised, the assurance is conditional; and that it would be difficult to establish, on such an uncertain ground, the existence of a real sacrament. Such an objection vanishes on the slightest attention, as naturally as the darkness of the night is scattered by the

rays of the morning sun. When St. James declares, that the Lord will raise up the sick man, he employs a Greek word, which, in various parts of the sacred writings, is used to designate the operations of the mind only¹: and the meaning immediately deducible from the term is, that the Lord will raise him from his state of anxious uneasiness, or torpid insensibility; will dissipate his alarms, and prepare him for his last passage. When the apostle adds, *if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him*, he by no means makes the effect of the sacrament depend upon a doubtful contingency: he rather supposes that to be certain, which usually follows in the natural order of things; and his expression is perfectly similar to what he says on the subject of praying for true wisdom: *If any man want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly*². Both these propositions, though expressed in a conditional form, unquestionably convey a certain and absolute truth. It is assuredly true, that we all want wisdom, and are all under the necessity of carrying our petitions to the throne of mercy; and it is equally certain, that something, either sinful, or disposing to sin, some relics of past sin, or some evil propensity, is to be found in the great mass of human beings at the awful and

¹ Εγρεσι. Vid. Rom. xiii. 11. Ephes. v. 14. 2 Pet. iii. 1.

² Ch. i. 5.

decisive hour of death. To remedy this disorder, and to confer a peculiar grace adapted to the wants of the sick man at that dread moment, is the grand and beneficent purpose of this consoling sacrament.

If the catechist wishes to have an authority, in a remote period of Christian antiquity, to prove the existence and use of this sacrament, he will find it recognized and sanctioned in the celebrated epistle of Innocent the First to Decentius, bishop of Gubbio. Innocent governed the church from 402 till 417; and in this document he sanctions the use of extreme unction, as then practised in the church. He was asked, if a bishop as well as a priest might administer the holy oil to the sick; and he determines, that he who blesses the matter of a sacrament, may, if it be convenient to himself, administer it. He then proceeds to say, that this holy oil is not to be administered to the impenitent, *because it is a sacrament*. For, adds he, *how can those who are debarred from the use of the other sacraments, be admitted to the participation of one in particular*¹.

St. Gregory the Great, to whose pious and apostolic zeal this country owes its conversion

¹ Nam quibus reliqua sacramenta negantur, quomodo unum genus putetur posse concedi. Epist. Innocent I. ad Decent. apud Cartanza, fol. 103.

from Paganism to Christianity, treats this sacrament as one of the seven, specifies the usual mode of blessing the matter of it, and of administering it to the sick with an accompanying form¹.

If to these authorities, we add the constant and perpetual practice of the Greek schismatical churches, and indeed of the Eastern churches of every description, we have such a weight of evidence in favour of the use of this sacrament, as bigotry can never reject².

But what says my *learned* opponent to this weight of reasoning and authority on the subject of this consoling sacrament. He produces many assertions and statements, which have been completely obviated in the course of these remarks.

I. He denies the institution of Christ ; a condition undoubtedly necessary to the existence of a sacrament. In answer to this I beg to restate what I have before said, that if the word of an apostle deserves any credit, we must believe Christ to have authorized him to promulgate the use of a rite, to which an inward grace is annexed. That he has published such a rite, is clear beyond all controversy ; that the nature of

¹ Vid. Sacramentar. St. Greg. Mag. ad Artic. Extrem. Unct.

² See the proofs of the belief of the Eastern churches in the learned work so often referred to in these pages. Perpet. de la Foi, tom. iii. liv. viii. pp. 411, et seq.

the rite so published, demanded an authority altogether divine, is equally incontestable : from the sanctity of the apostle, therefore, and from the public character with which he was invested, we are inevitably led to conclude, that what was done, was performed by the absolute direction of our Redeemer.

II. In this corresponding number, the catechist confounds the unction used for miraculous purposes, with that which was administered to the sick ; and contends, that because the first has been discontinued, the other should not be preserved. The differences of both practices I have already explained in terms so clear, that it becomes superfluous to repeat the statement.

III. It is asserted that the unction mentioned by St. James, is different from what is used in the church of Rome ; 1st, because it has no miraculous effects, as that used by the apostles had ; 2d, because they anointed persons to recover—in the Roman church, persons past recovery are anointed ; 3d, no such ceremonies are ascribed to the apostles, as are used in the church of Rome ; 4th, because grace is ascribed not to the unction, but to the prayer of faith ; 5th, because such a sacrament is unnecessary after the Lord's supper.

To all these flimsy and idle objections, I beg briefly to reply, First, That this statement supposes the unction mentioned by St. Mark, and

used by the apostles before their priesthood, to be the same as that recorded by St. James ; whereas we have shewn, by incontrovertible arguments, that they are essentially different. Secondly, I answer, that the observations in the corresponding number are founded on the same false assumption. Thirdly, If we read in the sacred Scriptures, of no such ceremonies performed by the apostles, as are used in the Catholic church, it is notorious that the sacred Scriptures do not record all that the apostles performed. If the reader will turn to the Sacramentary of St. Gregory before referred to, he will find these ceremonies extremely ancient. Fourthly, If the saving of the sick man is ascribed to the prayer of faith, the use of the oil is no more excluded by such an affirmation, than the waters of baptism would be by a similar proposition, which should attribute the effects of this latter sacrament to the solemn invocation of the three divine persons. Fifthly, If our Lord has thought proper to grant to the dying an additional help, besides the holy eucharist, it belongs not to the catechist, nor to any human being, to question the propriety of the concession.

QUESTION XXII.

Why do you look upon the church of Rome as in an error, for forbidding priests and clergymen to marry ?

ANSWER.

1. Because St. Paul plainly permits a bishop and other clergymen to marry. 1 Tim. iii. 2, 11. Tit. i. 6.
2. The same apostle saith to all men in general, "It is better to marry than to burn." 1 Cor. vii. 9.
3. The same apostle calls forbidding to marry, a doctrine of devils. 1 Tim. iv. 1, 3.
4. St. Peter himself, an apostle, and a priest, and, in the sense of the church of Rome, a Pope too, was a married man.
5. Several of the bishops of the primitive church were married men, such as Spiridion, Chæremon, Hilary, and others.
6. The priests of the Greek church do not observe this law of celibate, or single life.
7. The first Council of Nice approved of Paphnutis's opinion, that clergymen ought to be permitted to cohabit with their wives.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE *candid and learned catechist*, in stating the question concerning the celibacy of the clergy in the Catholic church, cannot refrain from a slight degree of misrepresentation. He supposes, that Catholic clergymen are absolutely and unconditionally forbidden to marry : but the real truth is, that they are restrained by severe penalties from violating a solemn engagement, knowingly and deliberately formed. No one obliges them to contract this obligation ; it is a

matter of their own free and unbiassed choice, and to carry it into effect, they have every help which religion can supply. If they should fail in the observance of a sacred and solemn duty, they fall under the censure denounced by St. Paul against the faithless widows. *When they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry, HAVING DAMNATION, because they have cast off their first faith*¹. The Catholic church, therefore, prohibits in its clergy, what St. Paul stigmatizes in the wanton widow, a violation of a sacred vow, solemnly and deliberately made.

Does the catechist wish to know the real grounds, which induce the Catholic church to admit those only to holy orders, who are willing to contract this engagement? Let him not distort the real meaning of the apostle, in various passages, which I shall explain in the proper place; but let him turn to a text where scepticism cannot raise a doubt. The real policy of the Catholic church in this concern, is to be sought for in a plain and undisguised statement of St. Paul. *But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married, careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife*².

¹ 1 Tim. v. 11, 12.

² 1 Cor. vii. 32, 33.

Listen, catechist, to a plain observation made by the great apostle. A state of celibacy leaves us free to pursue a holy vocation without care, without obstruction; but the state of marriage involves the person who engages in it, in worldly concerns and anxious solicitude. If, therefore, the work of God should be performed not with negligence and indifference, but with religious zeal and holy fervour; if the salvation of souls demands the undivided care of the Christian minister, is it not highly proper and decorous, that the church should persevere in the plan which she has hitherto pursued? If various situations in the service of temporal sovereigns often render inconvenient, and in many instances wholly preclude, the state of marriage; if numberless accidents constrain an immense mass of human beings to live unmarried, why should the church be debarred from claiming the undivided, the unobstructed care of its ministers? The catechist would probably have avoided, with extreme caution and reserve, all mention of this subject, if he had reflected on the doctrine laid down in the very first act of the legislature, by which the established clergy were permitted to marry. In this statute of the second of Edward VI. it is declared, that *It were much to be desired, that priests and all others in holy orders might abstain from marriage, that thereby, being freed from the cares of wedlock, and abstracted from*

*the thoughts of domestical business, they might more diligently attend the ministry, and apply themselves unto their studies*¹. Such is the language contained in this celebrated statute : and let me ask, with what share of decency can any writer, belonging to the establishment, reproach the Catholic church with error, in following a doctrine which is thus rationally and forcibly commended in such a quarter? Let the inconsiderate catechist, whenever in future he shall engage in a religious contest, beware of turning his own weapons against himself.

I am really conferring too much honour on the flimsy statements of the catechist, to shew their fallacy, by authentic documents of Christian antiquity ; but, perhaps, a few substantial proofs of the discipline, pursued by the church in this matter, may not prove unacceptable to the reader. The law of celibacy, by which Catholic clergymen are bound, is purely ecclesiastical, but founded on the grave and solid reasons before cited from St. Paul, and sanctioned even by a Protestant legislature. It is unquestionably derived from a pious and sacred custom, which prevailed in the apostolic age. During the three first centuries, it was enforced by the general fervour which animated every breast, and maintained by the spirit of zeal, which inflamed the

¹ See Heylin's Hist. Reform. Ed. VI. ad an. 1548, p. 67.

ministers of religion. In the fourth century, we find it established by positive injunctions. In the council of Elvira, held in 305, we observe direct commands addressed to all bishops, priests, deacons, and sub-deacons, to live in a state of continence, under pain of degradation from their rank¹. In the council of Neocæsarea, held about the same time, a similar law was framed under the same penalty². In the great council of Nice, it is strictly forbidden, that any clergyman should live in the society of a woman, except a mother, sister, aunt, or such as cannot excite suspicion³. A threat of degradation is pronounced against those who shall violate this injunction⁴. So general was the observance of this law, that when about the close of the same century, St. Jerom wrote against Vigilantius, who censured the celibacy of the clergy, that learned father declared the conduct of his opponent to be an injury to the apostles and martyrs. He affirms it to be a general law of all the distinguished churches in the catholic world, to admit those only to holy orders who were unmarried, or lived in a state of continence; or who, if they had wives, should consent to a separation⁵.

¹ Can. 33.

² Can. 1.

³ Can. 3.

⁴ Vid. Carranz. fol. 33, 36, 45, 53.

⁵ Quæ (nempe ecclesiæ) aut virgines clericos accipiunt, aut continentes; aut si uxores habuerint, mariti esse desistunt. St. Hier. contra Vigilant. libello 2^o versus init.

That this same salutary discipline was rigorously enforced by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, we learn from the most authentic sources. In a canon framed in the eighth century, at the period when archbishop Egbert governed the see of York, we read the following injunction :—
“ Let priests by no means marry wives, but love the church.” And again occurs the following peremptory mandate :—*“ If a priest or deacon should take a wife, let him lose his rank¹. ”*

What answer will the wisdom of the catechist frame to all these grave authorities? Will he continue to repeat with his friends, in the true spirit of ignorance and misrepresentation, that the law of clerical celibacy is a tyrannical injunction, introduced by the Popes, during the middle ages, for political purposes, and that it is condemned even by writers in our own communion? The first of these pleas has been amply refuted ; of the second, it may be briefly observed, that the opinion of any individual, however respectable, can have no weight, till the church shall think proper to make an alteration in her discipline. But let us hear the specific objections produced by the catechist.

I. He says, that St. Paul permits bishops and

¹ Wilks Conc. Vol. I. 112. can. 160 *Sacerdotes autem nequaquam uxores ducant; sed ecclesiam diligant. Item 133, can. 1. Si presbyter vel diaconus uxorem ducat, perdat ordinem suum. Item 134. can. 5- it. 136.*

priests to marry, as appears from 1 Tim. iii. 2, 11. Tit. i. 6.

Truly the catechist grossly mistakes the meaning of St. Paul, if he imagines that these passages give a license to bishops and priests to marry. It was indeed customary in that age of fervour, when sanctity pervaded every class of Christians, often to select married persons to fill the highest dignities of the church. Many of the brightest ornaments that have dignified her history, have been taken from that station. But even here the church has shewn extreme delicacy; for she has always declined to choose those who had been twice married. A second marriage, though lawful, has been deemed an indication of a sensual attachment to carnal pleasure. A bishop or a priest is thus required to be *a husband of one wife*; *μίας γυναίκος ἀνὴρ*; he must be one who has not engaged in a second marriage. Whenever the choice was made among married men for candidates for holy orders, the persons thus chosen lived ever afterwards in a state of continency; and of this fact, St. Jerom is an unexceptionable witness. His words are so clear on the subject, that language cannot supply information in a more perpicuous form. "*The apostles,*" says he, "*were either virgins, or lived in a state of continence after marriage. Bishops, priests, deacons, are either selected among virgins or widowers; or at*

*least they are to observe continence after their priesthood till death*¹." After this let the reader judge of the degree of confidence to be reposed in the assertions of the catechist.

II. Then, adds the catechist, St. Paul says to all men in general, *it is better to marry than to burn*². I must correct the statement of this writer, by a short but necessary distinction. St. Paul unquestionably allows all men to marry, *provided they have not contracted any previous obligation to remain single*; and in the absence of a sacred engagement, it is surely better to employ the remedy provided to allay human concupiscence, than to indulge passion in opposition to the divine will. *But where a solemn engagement to observe continence has been contracted*, as is practised by the Catholic clergy, St. Paul no more allows marriage, than he does to the wanton widow, whom he consigns to damnation, for betraying her first faith; or, in other words, for violating an obligation precisely of the same nature and description as that, which is contracted by the clergy of the Catholic church³.

III. Then, says the catechist, St. Paul calls

¹ Apostoli vel virgines, vel post nuptias continentes. Episcopi, presbyteri, diaconi, aut virgines eliguntur, aut vidui; aut certe post sacerdotium in æternum pudici. St. Hier. Epist. 50. Vid. etiam Origen. Hom. 17 in Luc. et St. Epiphani. hæres. 59.

² 1 Cor. vii. 9.

³ Loc. cit.

forbidding to marry, *the doctrine of devils*¹. To thee, O catechist, I reply ; shame and confusion on the man, who can thus distort the divine oracles for his own malignant purposes. St. Paul, in his passage referred to, is speaking of some who were to rise *in latter times*, alluding to the Manichees, Marcionites, and others, who broached doctrines subversive of civil society ; which, by anticipation, are justly stigmatized by St. Paul. But if prohibition to marry, directed to those who are bound by vow to observe continence, is to be denominated *the doctrine of devils*, St. Paul himself, in the estimation of the catechist, will be guilty of this atrocious offence, by forbidding the faithless widow to marry².

IV. Then, says this writer, so deeply versed in biblical learning, St. Peter was a married man, and a Pope. Truly so ; but has the catechist yet to learn, that he left *ALL* to follow Christ ? Let him open the gospel, and read *attentively* the passage here referred to³.

V. The same observation may be extended to the conduct of the eminent personages in the primitive church, if the authority of the learned and illustrious St. Jerom, the ornament of the fourth age, may be allowed to possess more weight, than the unsupported assertions of an anonymous catechist in the nineteenth century⁴.

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 1. 3.

² Vid. loc. cit.

³ St. Matt. xix. 27, 28, 29.

⁴ Vid. St. Hier. loc. cit.

VI. Then the catechist refers to the practice of the Greek church on the subject. Let him know, that it was never the discipline of either the Latin or Greek churches to suffer the clergy to marry *after* ordination; and that the ancient Greek church was fully as rigorous in enforcing clerical celibacy as the Catholic church is at this period¹. As to the practice of the Greek church, at a later date, it certainly became more easy in allowing clergymen to cohabit with wives, whom they had espoused *before* their entrance into holy orders. But this is no rule for the members of the Catholic church, until the present discipline shall be altered or modified by competent authority.

VII. The conduct of Paphnutius, as might be expected, is not accurately stated by the catechist. He did *not* assert that clergymen should generally be permitted to cohabit with their wives; on the contrary, he was of opinion, that those who came unmarried into the clergy, should always remain single, agreeably to the ancient discipline of the church. What he insisted upon with so much force was, that where clergymen were permitted by the custom of certain places to cohabit with wives whom they had espoused before ordination, they might not be obliged to separate by any new law. But what his own

¹ Vid. St. Epiphan. loc. cit.

practice had ever been appears from the historian Socrates; and what was at that time the practice of the great patriarchal churches of the East, appears from the authorities before produced¹.

¹ See and compare Socrates, lib. 1. c. xi. Sozomen, lib. 1, c. 13. with St. Hier. St. Epiphan. loc. cit. also Fleury Hist. Eccles. liv. xi. No. 17.

QUESTION XXIII.

Why do not you believe that the Church of Rome is infallible?

ANSWER.

1. Because her infallibility is only a pretence, founded neither in Scripture, nor reason, nor antiquity.
2. She hath actually erred, both in doctrine and the worship of God, and very grossly.
3. God hath no where promised to make any one particular church infallible.
4. Themselves are not agreed where this infallibility lies, whether in the Pope, or in a general council, or in the diffusive body of Christians.
5. This pretence of infallibility in that church, is nothing but a device to uphold their temporal dominion and grandeur.
6. Both their Popes and general councils have notoriously contradicted one another, and therefore neither of them can be infallible.
7. Whereas it is pretended, that an infallible judge is necessary, in order to decide controversies, we deny it.
1. Because controversies may be decided without an infallible judge, as they were in the primitive church; the bishops meeting in council, argued and determined controversies against heretics, from the word of God.
2. There is another way of determining controversies, without any infallible judge, and that is, a meek, humble, peaceable, and charitable temper: and therefore such a judge is not necessary.
3. We do not find, that when there were infallible judges in the world, such as Christ and the Apostles, that all controversies ceased or ended. There were schisms and heresies in St. Paul's time, 1 Cor. xi. 19; and if an infallible judge cannot rid the world of controversies, why should it be thought necessary for that purpose?

4. Suppose an infallible judge were necessary, why must that judge be necessarily in the church of Rome? Why not in any other church?
5. For all the pretences of infallibility in the church of Rome, they cannot decide the quarrels and controversies that are among themselves.

OBSERVATIONS.

IN discussing the question of the infallibility of the church, the catechist surpasses himself in the low arts of misrepresentation and calumny. He considers the whole controversy to be an insidious device to uphold temporal dominion and external grandeur; he takes the method usually employed to alter the state of the question, by directing the reader's attention, not to the whole Catholic church in communion with the sovereign Pontiff, but to the particular diocese of Rome; and he modestly affirms, that infallibility is a pretence, neither founded in Scripture, reason, nor antiquity. In order to recal this wanderer to the real state of the question, we must inform him, and request him always to bear in mind, that by the church of Rome laying claim to infallibility, is not to be understood the particular diocese of Rome, but the whole aggregate of particular churches throughout the universe, united in one faith, connected by the use of the same sacraments, and joined in one communion, under the Pope, the supreme pastor and successor of St. Peter. We must assure him, that

temporal dominion and external grandeur are considerations wholly foreign to the question ; the whole force of which consists in these positions : 1st, that Christ has bestowed on his church that infallibility, which preserves her from error in deciding matters of religious truth : 2d, that the church thus gifted is the Roman Catholic church, in the sense here explained, and no other. This is the nature of the celebrated claim made by the Catholic church ; and unless this be kept in view, how is it possible to prevent a confusion of ideas from pervading the whole discussion ?

Let us therefore begin by shewing, that our Redeemer really conferred on his church the prerogative of infallibility, which was to prevent error, and to preserve the faith inviolate, without variation, without disguise, without change. The catechist has asserted, that infallibility is a pretence contrary to Scripture : let him open the divine oracles, and witness with me the splendid promises, made by Almighty God, respecting his future church. Then he will cease to imagine, that the church, the most noble work of God, was ever abandoned to hazard, and consigned to error.

The prophet Isaiah seeing, in the light of God, the future kingdom of Christ, acknowledged in the Protestant bibles to be the church, described it as a mountain above mountains ; he

represents all nations as flowing to it, and its votaries exclaiming, *Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and HE WILL TEACH OF HIS WAYS, AND WE WILL WALK IN HIS PATHS*¹. Again, the same prophet, after exhibiting a bright picture of the future state of the church, has the following passage :—*And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness. No unclean person shall pass through it : but he himself shall be with them, walking in the way, and the foolish shall not err therein*². Before we make a single remark, let us proceed to furnish the view, which this distinguished prophet gives of the future church. After describing in glowing colours the amplitude of this spiritual kingdom, he exclaims, *Fear not ; for thou shalt not be ashamed : neither be thou confounded ; for thou shalt not be put to shame : for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband ; the Lord of Hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer the holy one of Israel ; the God of the whole earth shall he be called*³. And again, *No weapon that is formed against thee shall pros-*

¹ Isa. ii. 2, 3.

² Ibid. xxxv. 8. Lowth's Version. See and compare the translation of this passage with the common one, and both with the Hebrew text.

³ Ibid. liv. 4, 5.

*per ; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn*¹. Such is the representation of the nature, and of the properties of the church, as given by this prophet : it was to be a house of which God was to be the protector ; it was to be A WAY OF HOLINESS ; a WAY SO MANIFESTLY CLEAR, THAT FOOLS SHOULD NOT ERR ; the church was not to be put to shame, as she was ever to continue under the guidance of her Maker, of the Lord of hosts, of the Holy One of Israel, of the God of the universe. Now all these solemn assurances unquestionably exclude, in direct and positive terms, the possibility of error in the church in all matters of faith : they consequently overturn the only plea, on which the pretended reformation is founded. What judgment, therefore, are we to form of the doctrine *professed* by the catechist, on this very subject, on which the prophet conveys these solemn declarations ? By the 35th of the thirty-nine articles, a certain book of homilies is commended, as containing pious and salutary doctrine ; and is directed to be read carefully and distinctly, so as to be understood by the people. In one of these homilies occurs the following passage :—*Laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women and children, of whole Christendom, had been at once drowned in*

¹ Isa. liv. 17.

*abominable idolatry ; and that for the space of eight hundred years and more*¹. Let the abettors of such doctrine, and all those who join with the authors of these homilies in imputing error to the church of Christ, read the passages here produced from the prophet Isaiah, altogether of a contradictory import, and then hang down their heads in silent shame.

To convince the impartial reader, that it is not in a few solitary instances only, that God commissioned his prophets to represent his future church as under his immediate protection, and free from error, I will designedly produce copious extracts from the same divine source. The reader is requested to peruse the whole of the sixtieth chapter of the same prophet, and he will find a noble and sublime address, celebrating the glory and stability of the church : *Arise ; says the prophet, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people : but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee*². And afterwards : *Therefore shall thy gates be open continually ; they shall not be shut day nor night ; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings*

¹ Hom. against Peril of Idolatry, Part 3.

² Ver. 1, 2.

may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted¹. And again: Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I WILL MAKE AN ETERNAL EXCELLENCY, A JOY OF MANY GENERATIONS²! He then proceeds to exhibit, in the most dignified language of inspiration, that assurance of divine protection, which, by the very terms employed, necessarily precludes the possibility of error. *Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting, nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended*³. The title of this sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, in the protestant bible, is expressed in the following words: "The glory of the church in the abundant access of the Gentiles; and the great blessings after a short affliction." Here let me pause one moment, and ask the catechist, and, in fact, the Protestant of every

¹ Ver. 11, 12.² Ver. 15.³ Ver. 18, 19, 20.

denomination, how is it possible that you should read these sublime passages, *confessedly applicable only to the church of Christ*, in which the divine light is represented as continually shining on it, and that, at the same time, you should affirm, that idolatry, with every species of wickedness, had, for ages before the pretended reformation, pervaded the whole mass of Christians. If the God of all truth is to be believed, you must be pronounced guilty of uttering the most horrid and blasphemous falsehoods.

But let us look back to the concluding verses of the preceding chapter, which we have inadvertently passed over. *And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that return from the transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my spirit that is upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from HENCEFORTH and FOR EVER*¹. Here again we have the solemn assurance of God himself, that the Divine Spirit is never to be withdrawn from his church; and that the words which he shall put in her mouth, or the faith which he shall consign to her, will ever remain unalterable and unchangeable. Again, let these

¹ Isa. lix. 20, 21.

divine assurances be compared with the usual philippics against the abominations, that are said to have overspread the whole Christian world for ages past ; and those who profess the greatest reverence for the sacred Scriptures, who admit no other rule of faith, will surely conceive the utmost horror of contradicting its plainest declarations.

The reader is now requested to turn to the sixty-second chapter of this great prophet ; the title of which, in the protestant bible, is, “ The prophet’s fervent desire to confirm the church in God’s promises. The minister’s office in preaching the gospel.” Here the prophet, after representing the effects of the splendour of the church on the Gentiles, thus addresses her : *Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken ; neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate*¹. And again, *I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night : ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence ; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth*². Again, in the conclusion of the chapter : *Behold the Lord hath proclaimed*

¹ Ver. 3. 4.

² Ver. 6, 7.

*unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, sought out, A CITY NOT FORSAKEN*¹. After God had thus declared his constant and vigilant attention to protect his church; after his solemn asseveration, that he has appointed his watchmen to guard her against hostile attacks, by the selection of ministers to repel error, and explain the tenets of faith; after an explicit assurance, that the church shall not be FORSAKEN; how, let me again ask, can these persons, calling themselves “reformers,” have the impious boldness to assert, that God has *actually forsaken his church*; that a consequent apostacy lasted for ages; that the contagion affected both pastors and people? how can they carry their presumption so far, as not only to form this opinion, that the Almighty God of all truth has forfeited his word, but to ground upon this impious supposition, *a total change in the faith of the Christian world*. A calm and impartial comparison of the prophecies here cited, which are acknowledged by Protestants to regard the church, with the declarations and conduct of the whole host of

¹ Ver. 11, 12.

“ reformers,” will completely overturn the plea, which gave birth to their machinations, and justify the undeniable consequences here drawn.

The language of the other prophets is in perfect unison with the enraptured strains of Isaiah. Let the diligent reader turn to Jeremiah, and he will find the same truth clearly established¹. Let him proceed farther, and he will read the following passage: “ *In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this the name, wherewith he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness. For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests, the Levites, want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to offer sacrifice continually* ”². And again: “ *Thus saith the Lord; if ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites the priests my ministers. As the host of Heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me* ”³. Here the divine protection towards the church is promised with

¹ C. xxxi. v. 31, et seq. ² Ibid. c. xxxiii. v. 16, 17, 18.

³ Ibid. v. 20, 21, 22.

as much certainty, as the stated succession of day and night : an uninterrupted succession of pastors is held forth to view. And let the proud Reformer explain, how this can be compatible with the alleged errors, wickedness, and idolatry, on which he grounds his undertaking, and with the consequent abandonment on the part of God.

In terms of a similar import, is the kingdom of Christ, as his church is called in both testaments, displayed to view in the prophecies of Ezekiel¹. One part of the promise it will be proper to cite in the very words, without being satisfied with a general reference. In this passage, therefore, which, according to the Protestant bible, regards the kingdom of Christ, or his church, God positively declares, by the mouth of his prophet, concerning his people ; **NEITHER SHALL THEY DEFILE THEMSELVES ANY MORE WITH IDOLS** ². Here again let me triumphantly ask, how can Protestants charge the whole Catholic church with manifest idolatry, and make this alleged crime the ground of their separation, when God so positively declares that idolatry was to be banished for ever ? A rational man will find the answer to this question extremely simple and obvious.

If after these clear and succinct declarations concerning the existence and perpetual stability of the church of Christ, so clearly marked in these eminent prophets, any farther testimony should

¹ C. xxxvii. v. 21, et seq.

² Ibid. v. 23.

be required, let the reader peruse the whole of the fourth and fifth chapters of the prophet Micah, and he will find the same doctrine respecting this fundamental point, confirmed in terms which exclude all controversy. From these chapters, let the reader take the following passage for his deliberate consideration : *Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, LET HER BE DEFILED, and let our eye look upon Zion. BUT THEY KNOW NOT THE THOUGHTS OF THE LORD, neither understand they his counsel : for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise, and thrash, O daughter of Zion ! for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass : AND THOU SHALT BEAT IN PIECES MANY PEOPLE : and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord*¹.

This whole passage is said, in the Protestant bible, to refer to the victory of the church ; and on this admission is founded an argument, to which not even a specious reply can be framed. The language of the Reformers, and that employed by the enemies here mentioned, is precisely of the same nature and import, and equally directed against the church ; and a promise of the divine protection, and consequent victory, is here manifestly delivered. A simple question therefore arises : are we to give credit to the enemies of the church, who allege that *she has actually fallen into error*, or are we implicitly to

¹ Micah, c. iv. 11, 12, 13.

believe the assurances of God himself, *who promises perpetual stability, incessant exemption from error, and unremitted protection?* O Catechist! O Protestant! O self-constituted Reformer! answer this plain question, and consider the only answer, which the nature of the case admits, as subversive of the only plea for reform, and decisive of the whole controversy.

The same truth, so plainly foreshewn by the prophets, that there would be, after the coming of Christ, a spiritual kingdom, or church, enjoying perpetual stability, uninterrupted exemption from error, and the divine protection to the end; this identical and important truth is so clearly expressed in the New Testament, that human language cannot possibly convey any notion in terms more manifestly evident. What says our Redeemer in the well-known passage: *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*¹. From these words I collect three indisputable points; first, that Christ clearly manifested his intention of building a church, agreeably to the predictions of the prophets, whom we have cited: secondly, that the church so established would be exposed to a variety of trials, sufferings, and persecutions; and that the powers of darkness would be arrayed against it, for the obvious and malicious purpose of destroying it root and

¹ Matt. xvi. 18.

branch : and thirdly, that the church, so assailed, would, by virtue of this promise, defeat the malicious and avowed object of the most inveterate foes, and remain firm and unshaken to the end. No other possible meaning can the ingenuity of man give to this celebrated text ; and unless this obvious sense be admitted, we must consider all human language, and all forms of speech, so subject to caprice and uncertainty, as to convey no distinct idea whatever. If then it appears uncontestably clear that the church was to remain superior to the machinations of its most inveterate enemies, what becomes of the plea of those who, in defiance of this promise, declare that the church *has actually failed* ; that she has taught a variety of errors ; that she has even fallen into idolatry, and every species of crime ; that this disgraceful state was that of ALL CHRISTENDOM for more than eight hundred years ; and that thus the gates of Hell have, in the strictest sense of the word, prevailed against the church. From this it incontrovertibly appears, that the charter of Protestantism, the pillar of the " Reformation," stands in direct opposition to the positive and obvious declarations of our Redeemer ; and that, if we believe the reforming doctors, we must be reduced to assert, that Christ was in the wrong, and that they are in the right. Pious and Christian reader ! pardon the exposure on paper of an inference, however impious, which inevitably

follows from the Protestant declaration, that the church is fallible, and has actually failed.

If we advert to the means which our Redeemer employed to secure his future church from error, we shall remain perfectly convinced that the effect must be inevitably produced by so pre-eminent a cause. In his tender and pathetic address to his disciples before his passion, we find the well-known texts : *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you FOR EVER ; even the spirit of truth*¹. And again : *When he the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth*². By what fatality does it happen, that those persons who profess the utmost veneration for the word of God, who consider it as the sole rule of faith, without note, without comment, without interpreter, still venture to contradict the sacred writings, in the plainest assurances which language can convey ? He who has the words of eternal life has declared, in terms not to be mistaken, that ALL TRUTH should be taught in his church FOR EVER. Protestants assert, that for centuries ALL ERROR pervaded every rank and denomination of Christians, till the appearance of Luther, and the other bold patriarchs of reform, dissipated the gloom, and ushered in days of light. O Catechist O Protestant ! again use thy reasoning powers ; attend to the irresistible force of

¹ John xiv. 16, 17.

² Ibid. xvi. 13.

the plainest logic. A declaration opposed to the clear words of Christ, must be utterly false ; now the declaration on which Protestantism is founded, is opposed to the clear words of Christ ; therefore it is utterly false. It must consequently be deemed impious, blasphemous, derogatory to all piety, and destructive of every principle and sentiment of religion. How, let me ask again and again, could men, either sleeping or waking, imagine that they were performing the work of God, when all their efforts were directed to one point, to falsify his promises, to contradict his plainest assurances, and to prove that error had been engendered in that establishment, which was destined to be the abode of truth ?

To correct this erroneous impression, by which millions have been deluded, nothing more, it should seem, would be necessary, than to bestow a slight attention on the concluding words of St. Matthew's Gospel ; perhaps the last words which our Redeemer spoke to his friends : *Lo, I am with you all days, even unto the end of the world*¹. On this passage Dr. Porteus, the celebrated Protestant Bishop of London, thus writes : "That is, although I am about to leave you, and ascend into Heaven, and can no longer be personally present with you, yet the Holy Spirit, whom I have repeatedly promised to send unto you, *shall certainly come to supply my place, shall continually*

¹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

*abide with you, and shall enlighten, guide, assist, support, and comfort you to the END OF THE WORLD*¹." I can put no question to Dr. Porteus on the subject of this commentary, for he has long ago appeared before a more awful tribunal than that of public opinion, to answer for his religious sentiments: but I will ask his surviving friends and admirers, to explain to me, if they are able, how this promised light, guidance, assistance, support, and consolation, here acknowledged by this writer to be ensured to the church to the end of the world, can for one moment be deemed consistent with the horrors of idolatry, which both he and they, *professedly and officially*, impute to the whole of Christendom for more than eight hundred years²? In fact, the plain truth can be no longer concealed: the grand plea of Protestantism, of every denomination, it is thus apparent, is a direct contradiction of the promises of Christ, an insult to the divine veracity, and the establishment of a principle subversive of religion, piety, and common sense.

In perfect accordance with these principles, and in unison with these plain and unequivocal declarations of our Lord and Saviour, the great apostle of the Gentiles calls the church of the living God, *the pillar and ground of the truth*³.

¹ Lectures on St. Matthew's Gospel, vol. ii. lect. 24. p. 344. edit. 1805.

² See Homily, loc. cit.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Now, how is it possible, that a church thus characterised, can become the seat of error, the source of corruption, the school of idolatry? Is it not rather demonstratively true to say, after these plain, clear, and express declarations, by which error is excluded from the church to the end of the world, that the imputed charges of the Reformers are thus proved to be without foundation; and that thus the pillar of Protestantism is shaken, shattered, and broken to shivers? For if we are to believe our Redeemer, his church is built upon a rock, and is to stand for ever; if we give credit to them, it is built upon sand, like that of the foolish man: *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell*¹. It really appears an insult to an *ordinary* capacity, to dwell so long on a single topic, in order to prove the infallibility of the church, or in other terms, to shew that she cannot err in teaching religious truth; but the minds of Protestants are so diseased on this subject, that nothing but a constant repetition of the clearest truths, can produce the slightest impression.

To the irresistible weight of these clear and convincing testimonies, drawn from the sacred writings, are opposed some feeble objections; which, in the estimation of those who produce them, betray a forlorn and desperate cause. In

¹ Matt. vii. 27.

the first place it is maintained, that the mode of reasoning adopted by Catholic divines, is illogical; for, say the objectors, these Catholic reasoners labour to prove the existence of the Scriptures from the infallibility of the church; and again, they attempt to prove the infallibility of the church from the scripture; and thus they build their reasoning upon a fallacy, termed the "vicious circle." It may safely be pronounced, that if nothing more forcible than this can be produced against any cause, the attack must be weak in the extreme. The fallacy of the logical circle is found, when one proposition, which wants proof, is brought to prove another of the same description. But is this the case with respect to the infallibility of the church, and the existence and authority of the Scriptures? Are both these points of doubtful origin? Are they not in reality admitted by those, who affect to call in question their existence? As to the first, namely, the infallibility of the church, it was admitted long before the new scripture had an existence. The proofs of credibility, the preaching of the apostles, their known and attested miracles, the providential diffusion of the faith, with other similar events, had such an effect, as to induce beholders, even Pagans, to deem the church a most illustrious society of men. But when these causes were in full operation, and, by divine grace, produced a complete effect, then was the human mind subdued

to the obedience of faith ; and the church, which in the first instance was considered only as an illustrious society of men, was acknowledged to be divinely inspired, and assisted, independently of any written document. To supply a convincing proof of this statement, it is well known that the apostles, who had received no commission to write, published nothing in the first place ; but directed the faithful to repeat, as an essential term of communion, and immediately after the article concerning the Holy Ghost, **I BELIEVE THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.** The church was therefore known, not only as an illustrious society, but as a society divinely established, *teaching with authority the way of holiness, and consequently incapable of error in matters of faith*, before a particle of the New Testament was composed. Besides, with what decency can the Protestant, who admits the Scripture, exclude the Catholic from appealing to those sacred documents, the authority of which is acknowledged by both parties. This imputation, therefore, of recurring to the logical circle, must vanish upon the slightest examination. For here are not found two unknown propositions proving one another, but two points, clearly established, giving weight to each other ; in the same manner as the testimony of John the Baptist led the inquirer to Christ ; and the testimony of Christ enhanced the character of the precursor :

The weight of authority contained in these passages of Scripture referred to is so great, as to induce many Protestants to give to the church an infallibility in *fundamental* points, but to deny it to her in articles which they are pleased to term *non-fundamental*. We may really assert, that the author of this distinction was either a fundamental fool, or a designing knave. For if such a distinction be admissible, it will follow, that the separation from the church, with all its attendant evils, originated in a dispute about points not fundamental; consequently, not necessary to salvation. Secondly, it will follow that divine faith, without which it is impossible to please God, will be exposed to the utmost uncertainty, and thus will be extinguished. For amidst the conflict of discordant opinions on religious subjects, who is to determine what points are to be deemed *fundamental*, and what are to be considered as *non-fundamental*? The Protestant of the church of England admits the trinity of the divine persons, and the consubstantiality of the Son; the Socinian and the Unitarian sturdily reject both. The Arian, the Macedonian, the Nestorian, the Eutychian, the Pelagian, with ten thousand other denominations of religionists, support with vehemence their respective opinions, on what is or is not necessary to salvation. In this confusion of sentiments, arising from the principles of what is called reform, who shall decide what is precisely

to be deemed a fundamental point? There is no possible method of coming to any certain conclusion on the subject, if the authority established by Christ be rejected: and this celebrated distinction is but a hollow artifice to destroy the very existence of faith. A third and tremendous consequence arising from this distinction is, that the spirit of God, who was to teach *all truth for ever*, who, according to Dr. Porteus¹, was to *enlighten, guide, assist, comfort, and support the church to the end of the world*, is here made to insure infallibility only in some undefined points, on which there can be no agreement among religionists, and to suffer *positive error* to be taught in others. Thus the spirit of God, who was to teach *all truth*, is in some instances made a partisan of deception, and is represented as permitting the whole church to go astray. From such blasphemies, let every Christian promptly divert his attention.

If we consult the voice of Christian antiquity on this momentous question, which is decisive of every other point of controversy, we shall find the same uniform language, conveying the clearest statement, that nothing but truth is found in the church of Christ. On this very point St. Iræneus, who was the ornament of the second century, speaking of his master St. Polycarp, records that he visited Rome during the pontificate of Anicetus, and that he reclaimed many of the par-

¹ Loc. cit.

tisans of Valentinus and Marcion ; “ publishing aloud,” adds he, “ that the only truth which he had learned from the apostles, was that taught by the church¹.” It appears, therefore, that according to St. Irenæus and St. Polycarp, nothing but truth can be looked for in the church of Christ : here is no distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental articles : these are the disingenuous inventions of latter times, introduced for the obvious purpose of weakening, and finally destroying, that authority which Christ has bequeathed to his church.

The great St. Cyprian, adverting to the words of St. Peter to our Redeemer, *Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life*, thus expresses himself : “ St. Peter, upon whom the church was built, speaks here, and in the name of the church teaches and declares, that although the multitude, from stubbornness and pride, should desert their faith, *yet the church does not fall off from Christ*².” In his celebrated treatise *on the Unity of the Church*, he speaks in terms more explicit : “ *The spouse of Christ cannot become an adulteress*. She is undefiled ; she is pure ; she knows but one house ; she preserves the sanctity

¹ See St. Irenæus, lib. 3. c. 3. & 4. I recommend this whole work, and particularly the third book, to the attentive perusal of the catechist.

² Epist. ad Florent. 69. Edit. Pamel. 66. Edit. Oxon. versus fin.

of one chamber with exemplary modesty ; she it is who guards us for God ; who reserves the children, whom she has brought forth, for an eternal crown. *Whoever separates from the church, and joins an adultress, is excluded from the promises made by Christ to the church ; nor will he obtain the rewards of Christ, who leaves the church of Christ : he is an alien ; he is a profane man ; he is an enemy. He cannot have God for his father, who has not the church for his mother*¹.” Language more appropriate, forcible, and decisive, is not to be found, than what St. Cyprian here employs to condemn the insolence of those who charge the church with error, in order to separate themselves from its authority. Leaving the catechist to make this remarkable passage the subject of his pious contemplation, I will cite an authority not less decisive, from a popular work of the great St. Augustine. That most learned and most eminent father, in explaining the creed to the catechumens, comes to the part relating to the church ; on which he writes in the following terms : “Here is pointed out God and his temple. The temple of God is holy, says the apostle, which you are. This is the holy church, the one church, the true church, the Catholic church, combating all heresies. Fight she can, but she never can be subdued. All heresies

¹ St. Cypr. de Unit. Eccles. p. 151. Edit. Pamel. p. 78. Edit. Oxon.

have gone out from her, like useless branches cut from the vine. But she remains in her root, in her vine, in her charity. *The gates of Hell can never prevail against her*¹." The reader will observe, that these testimonies of these distinguished fathers in favour of the church, tend to shew that she is incapable of error in religious concerns, and that a wilful separation from her pale, on the alleged ground of false doctrine, is a crime of spiritual apostacy. This evidence, therefore, precludes the criminal and haughty attempts of false teachers, designing heretics, and pretended reformers of every age and nation.

But what says my *learned* antagonist to this weight of authority?

Ἐξαύδα μὴ κεῖθε νόω, ἵνα εἶδομεν ἄμφω.

I. He roundly asserts, that infallibility is proved neither in Scripture, reason, nor antiquity. I beg leave strongly to recommend to his deliberate attention, the whole of the preceding remarks on this question, and he will find to his cost, perhaps to his bitter regret, that infallibility is supported by all these several grounds. For surely when the divine oracles decisively establish any certain point, and the most splendid testimonies of antiquity confirm it by their weight, as we have clearly shewn on this grand question, no rational creature can withhold a firm and undoubted assent.

¹ St. Aug. Symbol. ad Catechumen, lib. 1. tom. 9. p. 259. Colon. Agripp. 1616.

II. If, as is here alleged, the church has erred very grossly, both in doctrine and worship, what is to become of those clear, noble, and splendid promises, which we have recounted from the sacred writings? Are they to be considered as mere words of ceremony, without meaning, and without effect? The church of Rome, comprehending within its pale the great mass of Christians, was, at the period of the "Reformation," the only religious institute which could claim the honour of being the church of Christ; and if she failed, the predictions of the prophets, and the assurances of our divine Redeemer, are reduced to a mere fable. Such is the situation in which our opponents place themselves by their unwarrantable attacks.

III. Then it is said, that God has no where promised to make any particular church infallible. And when we claim infallibility, we do not ascribe it to any particular church, not even to the single diocese of Rome; a misrepresentation of our opponents, which we are obliged incessantly to correct: but we attribute it to the whole Catholic church, of which the diocese of Rome is the head and centre. And if the whole Catholic church, in communion with the See of Rome, is not to be considered the church of Christ, we may ask, where is his church to be found? Where are we to look for that church against which the gates of Hell were never to prevail?

She must have vanished from the face of the earth, and disappeared for ages past, in opposition to the repeated declarations of eternal truth.

IV. It is untrue, that Catholic divines are not agreed where to place this infallibility. The infallibility of the Pope, though a disputed point in the schools, is no where considered *an essential term of communion* ; but it is clearly a matter of universal belief in the Catholic church, that God, in virtue of the promises so distinctly made concerning this spiritual kingdom, will never permit a general council, sanctioned by the Pope, to fall into error ; nor that the whole body of pastors will be suffered to go astray.

V. When the catechist asserts, that infallibility is a pretence to uphold temporal dominion, he either deceives himself, or wilfully imposes on his readers. For infallibility was never understood to be any thing else but an exemption from error in propounding religious truth ; and as such, it can have no connexion with temporal sway.

VI. As to the imputed contradictions between popes and councils, the catechist, if he hopes to produce a serious argument, must prove that popes, at the head of general councils, have *taught contradictory doctrines on religious truths* ; but this he is wholly unable to accomplish.

VII. When the catechist affirms, that we assert an infallible guide to be necessary to decide controversies, he thinks proper, doubtless for his per-

sonal convenience, to shift the state of the question at issue. We beg therefore to inform him, that the true state of the question is not, whether an infallible guide be, or be not necessary, but whether such a guide do actually exist by divine appointment, and in virtue of the promises of Christ. We justly maintain the affirmative side of the question, which we support by arguments, to which the catechist will never find a satisfactory answer ¹.

1. Though the catechist has changed the state of the discussion by questioning the necessity of an infallible judge, he is extremely unfortunate in producing reasons to support his own opinion. He says that controversies were decided in the ancient church without an infallible judge. The very reverse of this statement will appear from a slight inspection of the preliminary acts of every council held in the church; particularly the first four councils of Nice in 325, of Constantinople in 381, of Ephesus in 431, and of Chalcedon in 451. In imitation of the apostles, who prefaced their decision on the legal observances with these remarkable words: *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us* ²; these councils always considered themselves as assembled under the guidance of the divine spirit, and as acting by his authority: they cannot consequently be charged

¹ See the preceding Observations. ² Acts xv. 28.

with error, in the estimation of a Christian¹. Indeed, the decisions of the general councils on doctrinal matters, have always been received by the Catholic church as the dictates of the spirit of God: and in accordance with this principle, St. Gregory the Great, speaking of the first four general councils, says: "I profess the same reverence towards the first four general councils, as I do towards the four books of the gospels²." "The council of Chalcedon," says St. Leo, "was assembled by the Holy Ghost³." The catechist surely forgot himself, when he appealed to the authority of the ancient church against infallibility; and particularly so, when it escaped his recollection, that the first four councils are received by his own church⁴.

2. When the catechist proposes a method of deciding religious controversies without an infallible judge, by a mild and conciliating temper, does he mean to oppose his idle suggestion to the contrivances of infinite wisdom? *If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican⁵*. Does he design to substitute his theory for actual practice? is it the purport of his theology to deny that a real and efficient power was lodged in the church by him who has said, *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he*

¹ See the acts of these councils in Labbe, Carranza, and Cabussut.

² St. Greg. Magn. epist. 24.

³ St. Leo, epist 73.

⁴ 1 Eliz. c. 1.

⁵ Matt. xviii. 17.

*that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me*¹. Let him give an answer to these trying questions; or rather, let him express his shame and repentance for his feeble and wicked attempt to annihilate the power which our Redeemer has clearly left in his church; a power fully described by St. Paul, in a well-known passage: *And he gave some apostles, and some prophets; and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO, AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE, by the sleight of men, and the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive*².

3. When he argues against an infallible judge, because the effects intended have not been produced, he might with equal propriety argue against the Christian dispensation altogether, because the benevolent intentions of our Redeemer have not met with a due correspondence on the part of those whom he came to redeem. It really is a task, unworthy of the dignity of a divine, to

¹ Luke x. 16.

² Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14.

notice at any length such wretched and contemptible reasoning.

4. When he asks why the church of Rome, more than any other church, should be gifted with infallibility, I will confidently tell him, that he can easily collect the reason of this prerogative from the preceding observations. The church of Christ is clearly infallible, as we have seen : now every reformed church in existence has disowned the prerogative of infallibility ; consequently, by their own admission, not one of them singly, nor all of them collectively, can claim to be that church, which was to be ruled FOR EVER by the spirit of God ; which was to be the PILLAR and FOUNDATION of TRUTH ; which was to teach ALL TRUTH ; which was to enjoy the special and perpetual assistance of our Redeemer to the end. In fact, the whole Catholic church, acknowledging the Roman church to be the mother and mistress of all churches, and the Pope of Rome to be the successor of St. Peter, was the only universal or Catholic church on earth, when the " Reformers " commenced their apostacy. This statement is acknowledged both by Luther and Calvin : "*At first I stood alone,*" says the former. "*We have been constrained,*" says the latter, "*to separate ourselves from the whole world*¹." If therefore Christ *always* had a church on earth to be

¹ *Primo solus eram*, Luther Præf. Oper. *A toto mundo discessionem facere coacti sumus*. Calvin, Epist. 141.

preserved inviolate to the end of time, the only church then in existence, can lay an exclusive claim to the dignity of being considered the true and legitimate spouse of Christ.

5. When the catechist asserts, that we cannot decide the disputes among ourselves by this boasted infallibility, he confounds two things totally distinct in their nature, and widely different in their consequences : I allude to articles of faith, as terms of communion, on one side, and to matters of individual opinion on the other. In articles of faith, we all agree without the smallest hesitation ; and this from an intimate conviction that Almighty God, after all his divine assurances, will never suffer his church to go astray. As to matters of opinion, they are left to the discretion of those who may choose to exercise their own judgment and ingenuity, without violating the precious deposit of faith. The motto of the Catholic may be said to be the well-known sentence of St. Augustine :

In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas.

QUESTION XXIV.

Why do you find fault with the church of Rome for not suffering the common people to read the Bible ?

ANSWER.

1. Because in doing so they act contrary to the command Christ gives to all, to *search the Scriptures*. John v. 39.
2. Because what they forbid, the apostles commend ; as we see in the example of the Bereans, who are commended for reading the Scriptures. Acts xvii. 11.
3. It is contrary to the practice of the primitive church, in which the fathers earnestly exhorted the people to an assiduous and diligent reading of the Scriptures.
4. It agrees not with St. Paul's counsel and exhortation, 1 Thess. v. 7, *I charge you that this Epistle be read to all the holy brethren*.
5. It was the duty of the Jews to have the law in their houses, and to read it to their children. Deut. vi. 7. And therefore must be much more the duty of Christians, to read or peruse the Gospel, as being a people living under a greater and richer economy.
6. Whereas it is pretended that the Scriptures are obscure, and that this prohibition is to prevent heresies. We answer, that the Scriptures are not so obscure in places relating to things necessary to salvation, but that they may be understood by the laity. And as to the plea of preventing heresies, that is only a pretence, no argument, since they might as well forbid people to eat or drink, for fear they should abuse that liberty.

OBSERVATIONS.

AGAIN we have to complain of misrepresentation in stating the practice and discipline of the Ro-

man Catholic church, in the regulation of that attention which is justly bestowed by the faithful on the sacred Scripture. It is *not true* that the church refuses to the people the use of the Bible : the pastors of the church have uniformly encouraged and patronised the publication of the sacred volume ; and, in many instances, have themselves given various editions of the Scripture in the vulgar tongue. This practice has been observed in every Catholic country ; and surely to what purpose can such editions serve, but to administer to the wants of that portion of the faithful, who are unacquainted with the learned languages. This prohibition, therefore, of using the food of the divine word, is a calumny which has a thousand times been repeated, and as often been denied.

But what is the real ground of the charge, the truth or falsehood of which, it should seem, might so easily be verified ? This may easily be explained in a small compass. Those who would have the candour to learn the present discipline of the Catholic church from the authentic and authorized source of the Council of Trént, might easily satisfy themselves, that the utmost diligence is constantly recommended to the pastors of the church, to feed their flocks with the food of the divine word¹. But while this general charge is given to the pastors, to instruct the people in the doctrine of the Scripture, the church, like a ten-

¹ Sess. 5. de Reformat. c. 2. item Sess. 24. c. 4.

der mother, feels herself compelled to prevent the most salutary food from degenerating into poison, by the indiscretion of those who use it. Hence in those Catholic countries, where the discipline of the Council of Trent has been generally received and published, certain salutary restraints have been devised and enforced, in order to preserve the purity of the divine word, and to prevent that from becoming hurtful to souls, which was intended to be their light and support. With this view the church has forbidden, in the first place, the use of such versions of the sacred Scripture, as come from dangerous quarters, or from those who might be suspected of corrupting or falsifying the divine oracles. Secondly, she prohibits the indiscriminate and promiscuous use even of authorized versions, without the approbation and leave of the pastors of the church. These two points are carefully enforced, where the rules of the Council of Trent are received and published¹. It becomes necessary to make an accurate statement of the case; for probably the distinction between faith and discipline, and the necessity of having matters of discipline published before they become obligatory, are points which have escaped the researches of our profound theologian. In the third place, what the Catholic church positively and peremptorily insists upon is, that no one is to follow his *private judgment* in the

¹ Vide Reg. 3, 4, 5. ad Calc. Conc.

interpretation of the Scripture ; but that he is to adhere to the judgment and interpretation of the church. Now where is the man, possessing a notion of ecclesiastical government, and impressed with the necessity of observing due order and indispensable discipline, who would reprehend these restraints, or censure these salutary precautions ?

As to the first precaution, by which the church prohibits the general use of corrupted versions, the prudence and propriety of the measure are self-evident ; for if veneration is due to the divine word, this must clearly be understood of the word of God, presented in a genuine and authentic form. No falsifier of any part of the sacred writings can presume to imagine, that his hurtful labours will be received with the countenance and respect which are bestowed on a fair edition, or on an authentic version of the Holy Scriptures.

As to the second restraint, if the word of God is to be considered in the light of food, by which the souls of the faithful are to be fed for life eternal, it is surely not inconsistent with the maternal office of the church, whom all are commanded to hear, to introduce certain regulations in the use of this food, for the sole purpose of rendering it more salutary, and of preventing the effects of indiscretion. In the common conduct of life, it is an object of importance with those intrusted with the care of health, to withhold from the pa-

tient the use even of wholesome and substantial food, when circumstances render such a precaution proper and necessary: and if the church sees, what frequently and unquestionably happens, that the weak, the thoughtless, and unstable, make an improper use of the sacred word of God, it is evidently the duty, as it is the present practice of the church in those parts where the discipline of the Council of Trent has been published, not to prohibit the use of the Scripture, as has been so often asserted, but to place the use of it under such restraints as will prevent evil. In fact, what physician, who practices the art of healing with any credit or success, would venture to indulge his patients in the indiscriminate use of all kinds of food, under all circumstances, and under the pressure of every complaint. Such laxity of principle and conduct would not be tolerated in civil society; and why is the church to consign the holy word of God indiscriminately to persons of all classes, without introducing regulations to render it salutary and productive? St. Peter, speaking of the Epistles of St. Paul, asserts, that in them ARE SOME THINGS HARD TO BE UNDERSTOOD, WHICH THEY THAT ARE UNLEARNED AND UNSTABLE, WREST, AS THEY DO THE OTHER SCRIPTURES, TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION¹. In real truth, if there is any form of ecclesiastical government established by the wisdom of our Redeemer, if

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 16.

he really commissioned bishops to feed the church of God¹, it becomes their paramount duty to prevent that, which is wholesome, from being converted into a poison that will lead to destruction. These precautions and restraints, therefore, which have been so much misrepresented and calumniated, are in reality such as are dictated by the ordinary rules of prudence, and sanctioned by the usual conduct of human life.

As to the third point of discussion, which is absolutely required as a means of preserving Catholic unity, I mean the necessity of submitting to the authority of the church in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, it is a point so clear, so reasonable, so congenial to the common sentiments of mankind on the subject of order, that it can scarcely be conceived how the opposite opinion could gain ground in the world. It is a principle universally admitted, that government cannot be maintained without rule and subordination; and no code of laws was ever framed, which was not consigned to the interpretation of judges, or of those who possessed professional knowledge. In fact, in taking a retrospective view of the various governments which have existed from the beginning of time, what form of legislation can be traced, which gave to individuals the right of interpreting those laws on which the welfare of society depended? Such a

¹ Acts xx. 28.

form of government would be a monster
 ture ; it would legalize discord, and
 anarchy ; it would dissolve the bond
 society is held together ; it would be
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 in the Scripture : the greatest point*

troversies and dubious matters, can we suppose that he has altered this mode of proceeding in the law of grace, and made each individual, assisted by the private spirit, the interpreter of the divine will, the expounder of the divine law, the architect of his own faith, the supreme judge in all matters relating to the most important concerns that can interest human nature? Can such a singular dispensation be imputed to infinite wisdom, by a man who possesses a spark of religion? The question is easily decided by documents contained in the new Scripture. It appears that our great Lord and charitable Redeemer gave to his apostles a real and efficient power of instructing the faithful, and of deciding all differences: *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth; GO, THEREFORE, TEACH ALL NATIONS*¹. Those who neglect to HEAR THE CHURCH, are to be treated as heathens and unbelievers²; and St. Paul, as we have often remarked, styles the church the PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH³. The church is, therefore, the grand tribunal before which all spiritual concerns are to be brought and decided. Now among cases which may admit of discussion and controversy, are evidently to be ranked points of the divine law contained in the Scripture: and when such events actually take place, why should the form of government, devised by our Redeemer, give way to the pretended right of pri-

¹ Matt. xxviii. 18; 19.

² Ibid. xviii. 17.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

vate judgment? St. Paul, in a well-known passage, which we have before cited, clearly establishes the government of the pastors of the church, in terms which utterly destroy this supposed right; for he alleges, that the various pastors and guides, whom he enumerates, are appointed, **THAT WE BE NO MORE CHILDREN, TOSSED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE**¹. St. Peter, in terms not to be misconstrued, declares that **NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE IS OF PRIVATE INTERPRETATION**². After such clear and incontrovertible testimonies, how is it possible, with any colour of reason, to set up the right of private interpretation? The purpose which the authors of this system have in view, in appealing from the Scripture as explained by the Catholic church, to the Scripture as explained by themselves, is so manifestly and so grossly visible, as not to deceive the plainest and most vulgar capacity.

But perhaps it may be alleged, that all these declarations of Scripture are not to be taken in the most rigorous meaning; and that in consequence of the superior light which was promised to the faithful in the new law, the apostles and their immediate successors might have left the supposed right of private judgment inviolate. Let this difficulty be decided by the holy Scripture, to which our opponents are so fond of appealing, in opposition to all authority. When

¹ Ephes. iv. 11—14.

² 2. Pet. i. 20.

the celebrated dispute took place between the converted Jews and Gentiles, concerning the ceremonies of the old law, the controversy was decided, not by the judgment of private individuals, nor by any number of the parties concerned; the business was referred to the council of the apostles at Jerusalem, and their decision was pronounced and received as an oracle of the Holy Ghost: *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us*¹. In the same authoritative manner every dispute, which took place in subsequent periods of the church, was brought to a final close by the voice of general councils; and all who refused submission to their dogmatical decrees, were treated as heretics, who preferred their own judgment to that of the church. Thus were the Arians, the Macedonians, the Nestorians, and the Eutychians, condemned in the first four general councils; and any appeal from the Scripture as understood and explained by the fathers of these councils, to the Scripture as interpreted by individuals, particularly by the parties concerned, has always been regarded as a wretched and pitiful subterfuge, to set aside that authority which Christ has left in his church. But it is time to listen to the oracular wisdom of the catechist on the subject, and to investigate his *learned* statements.

I. In the first place he says, that Catholics act

¹ Acts xv. 28.

in opposition to the command of Christ, who says, *search the Scriptures*¹. It were to be wished, that all who produce a text from the sacred Scripture to establish any point, would first consider the whole context of the passage which they think proper to cite. This precaution would dissipate the greatest portion of flimsy arguments drawn from the sacred writings. The text produced by the catechist, contains not a shadow of command to lay the Scriptures indiscriminately before the faithful. Our Redeemer is there establishing against the Jews the reality of his mission, and his consubstantiality with his heavenly Father; and he asserts that those evidences, to which they appealed, bear witness to his character. He says²: *You sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.* In the same way he adds: *You search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me*³. This version and interpretation, which accord with the context, as well as with the Greek original, will be found to contain no command, but only a reference to the practice which the Jews were pursuing.

Besides, were we to grant that a command is conveyed in the words of Christ, such a concession would by no means warrant the inference of the catechist; for his argument would run thus: Christ, in discussing with the Jews the subject

¹ John v. 39.² Ibid. 33.³ Ibid. 39.

of his divine mission, refers them to the Scriptures ; therefore, by the force of this direction, the whole body of the sacred Scriptures, without note or comment, is to be laid open promiscuously to the inspection of all the faithful, that they may come to such conclusions as the spirit shall suggest. The head that can produce such reasoning, is not fitted for theological discussion.

II. Then he argues, that the Bereans are commended for reading the Scriptures¹, and that consequently the Scriptures may be indiscriminately read by *all the faithful*. This consequence by no means flows from the commended practice. The Bereans are here described *as more noble than those in Thessalonica, and as receiving the word of God with more readiness*². But because such persons are applauded for examining and comparing the doctrine of the apostles with the predictions of the prophets, does it follow that the ignorant and illiterate, the ploughman and the peasant, should be urged to read every part of the sacred Scripture indiscriminately, without note or comment? and that the church, as a mother and guardian of the faithful, is not competent to introduce salutary restraints, and prudential precautions, for the purpose of inspiring christian humility, and a love of submission and order? It is really not too severe a censure to say of the catechist, that in all his allegations

¹ Acts xvii. 11.

² Ibid.

on this and other subjects, there appears neither a knowledge of Scripture, nor of Christian antiquity, nor any portion of natural or artificial logic.

III. Here he urges, that the practice of the Roman Catholic church is contrary to that of the primitive church, when the holy fathers exhorted the people to a diligent reading of the Scriptures. It is perfectly true that the holy fathers perpetually urged the faithful to an attentive perusal of the divine oracles : and the Roman Catholic church, at the present period, would, under similar circumstances, pursue the same method. The catechist appears not aware, that matters of discipline must ever vary with the shifting scenes and changeable occurrences of human life ; nor does he seem thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances, in which the holy fathers are perpetually urging their hearers to read the divine oracles. In those days of fervour, it was the continual practice of Christian bishops and preachers to explain the Scriptures at full length, in discourses styled homilies : not only Sundays, but days of devotion, and the penitential seasons of the year, were devoted to this salutary purpose. The same zealous pastor would often appear thrice in the day, in the performance of a function so useful and so salutary to religion. In this manner St. John Chrysostom explained the whole Scripture : the greatest portion of his im-

mortal writings, which have been preserved for the instruction of mankind, consists of homilies of this description. Those of St. Augustine and St. Gregory, among the Latin fathers, possess their relative value and importance ; and similar productions of other fathers might be mentioned with applause. To be prepared for these instructions, and afterwards to retain them, it was proper that the faithful should be assiduous in reading the Scriptures, and particularly the parts that had been expounded, in order to co-operate with the zeal and activity of the pastors. This is the real reason of that earnestness which St. John Chrysostom and other fathers perpetually employed, to animate the faithful to read the word of God ; and this is in perfect unison with the spirit of the church at all times. To urge the faithful to study the divine oracles in sentiments of humility, docility, and submission, with such guides as the holy fathers, or any orthodox commentators ; and to introduce salutary restraints, by which the unlearned and the unstable are prevented from wresting the Scriptures to their own perdition, are objects by no means incompatible, and are both directed by the maternal tenderness, and the sagacious prudence of the church.

IV. The corresponding number contains a singular piece of reasoning. The apostle¹ orders his epistle to be read to the brethren ; *therefore*,

¹ 1 Thess. v. 27.

urges the catechist, it is the duty of all to read the Scriptures. The epistle was undoubtedly read, agreeably to St. Paul's desire, in the religious assemblies of the faithful, where the pastors were present to explain any difficulties; and this is what the Catholic church sanctions by her practice. But this does not authorize the indiscriminate reading of the Scripture, without note or comment, where each man constitutes himself the judge of the divine oracles, and the architect of his own faith?

V. If the Jews were urged to make the divine law the subject of incessant meditation, it is perfectly right that Christians should pursue the same conduct with increased ardour; but this is to be accomplished with exact order, and the rigid observance of discipline; with a profound humility of mind, and a strict submission to the order established by Christ; which was, constantly and invariably to hear his church.

VI. The catechist surpasses himself in boldness and insolence, when he arraigns the practice of the Catholic church, on what he deems a false ground of the obscurity of the Scriptures; which, says he, are not so obscure in things necessary to salvation. St. Peter thought otherwise, when he represents the unlearned and unstable, wrestling not only the epistles of St. Paul, but OTHER SCRIPTURE, to their perdition¹. Besides, if the

¹ Loc. cit.

Scriptures are so clear in doctrines necessary to salvation, by what unlucky combination of circumstances has it happened, that the days of "Reformation," which are supposed to have ushered in light on a benighted world, have exhibited such a want of uniformity among the reforming doctors and their disciples? Books without end might be written to expose the variations of Protestant churches, and Protestant divines : the learned and eloquent Bishop of Meaux published two ample volumes on the subject, and has favoured the world with such testimonies, as completely destroy the credit of Protestantism¹. Even on the subject of the most adorable Trinity, the knowledge of which is surely necessary to salvation, the most inconsistent, jarring, and romantic systems, have been formed among Protestants ; and numbers at this day, designating themselves Unitarians, openly and avowedly give up the mystery altogether. What is the source of this evil, but the indiscriminate liberty allowed by the principles of Protestantism, not only of reading the Scripture without the necessary precautions of Christian humility and orderly submission, but of judging of the contents of the sacred volume, without the aid of note, comment, or interpreter.

Let not the catechist then assert, that the prevention of heresy is a mere plea for the salutary

¹ See *Variations des Eglises Protestantes*, par Bossuet, passim : edit. Paris, 1730.

precautions in question, without any substantial foundation ; since the state of the Protestant world is a practical proof of the solidity of the Catholic discipline. Let him cease to exclaim, that we might as well forbid the use of meat and drink, for fear of abuse ; for if he asks his medical adviser whether, in any case, the natural liberty of mankind should be restrained in the use of meat and drink, he will unquestionably receive for answer, that innumerable instances occur where such restraint becomes necessary for the preservation of human life, and for the maintenance of that station, which has been assigned to each person by the orders of Providence. A similar mode of reasoning fully justifies the Catholic church in all the prudential precautions which duty has impelled her to adopt, in preventing a general and indiscriminate license of reading the sacred Scripture, without note, comment, or exposition.

QUESTION XXV.

Why do you believe that the books commonly printed, and bound up with the Bible, called Apocrypha, are not canonical Scripture ?

ANSWER.

1. Because the true oracles of the Old Testament were delivered to the Jewish church, Rom. iiii. 2, and these books were not delivered as such.
2. These Apocrypha were not written by men inspired, as all canonical Scripture must be. 2 Tim. iii. 16.
3. As the Jewish church knew of no other canonical Books of the Old Testament, but what the Protestant churches own ; so the primitive church received no other from the Jews but these.
4. Some of the authors of the books called Apocrypha make excuses for themselves, and beg the reader's pardon for their mistakes ; which is not the language of the Holy Ghost. See 2 Maccab. xv. 38 : see also the Prologue to Jesus the Son of Sirach.
5. In the ancient account of canonical books, particularly that of the Council of Laodicea, in the year 364, these Apocrypha are left out.
6. Whereas it is pretended that these Apocrypha were read in the primitive church, we grant it ; but it was for the instruction of men's morals : they did not resolve their faith into them ; no more do we.
7. Some learned men of the church of Rome do not believe them to be canonical.

OBSERVATIONS.

HERE we have a most important subject of discussion, in finding a true and unequivocal rule

by which genuine Scripture, containing the word of God, and the real expression of the divine will, may be distinguished from what is spurious, and barely human. Unless such a rule can be found, how are we to proceed? how are we to ascertain the current coin of the kingdom, without clear and unerring marks, by which we are to discern what possesses real value from what is base? In human concerns, we are not satisfied to be abandoned to hazard, to be guided by the opinions of individuals, however respectable and eminent, when the affair is of the utmost moment, when the consequences are irreparable, and when opinions are discordant.

If a question should arise, whether a point which deeply interests all the members of a political community, be or be not a law of the land, the course to be pursued is extremely clear. When neither the learned in the law, nor the appointed judges and guardians of right, can come to any certain conclusion, recourse must be had to the supreme power of the state; and nothing can set the question at rest, but a legislative enactment, or an authoritative declaration. If such a resource is offered to us in deciding human controversies, are we to be left destitute in a business of all others the most important, when we are inquiring, which are those books that convey the will of the Almighty, as communicated to man? If temporal sovereigns make known their

orders to their subjects, without danger of deception, by the appointment of a regular series of subordinate officers, is the will of the Almighty to be left in a state of obscurity, without any mark, by which a book, containing the positive divine law, can be distinguished from a spurious and fabricated production? This cannot be; it is not consistent with the general analogy of government, whether ecclesiastical or civil; it is opposed to the usual ways of Providence; it is contrary to the positive declarations of our Redeemer, to which we have so often referred, and by which he stands pledged to protect his church from all error, and to lead her into *all truth*. For if there existed no mode of ascertaining the authenticity and inspiration of the sacred Scriptures, or if it could be proved that the Catholic church has proposed to the faithful a book, or any part of a book, as true Scripture, which could be shewn evidently not to be the word of God, that would amount to a substantial demonstration that she has led the faithful into error and deception. But as long as we can rely on the words of our Redeemer, that event can never take place: eternal truth is incapable of any deceit; the declarations of God cannot be falsified. We are therefore constrained, in this as in all other discussions relating to faith, to listen to the voice that descends from above; to obey that authority which Christ himself established. There is no other method

under the sun, of bringing religious disputes to a close, or determining what is or what is not Scripture, but by listening to the voice of that church, founded by our Redeemer; which we have proved to be the church in communion with the See of Rome. This consideration had such a weight on the mind of the great St. Augustine, that he openly declares, that he would not believe the gospel, were he not induced to do it by the **AUTHORITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**¹.

The catechist and the Protestant of every description, by depriving himself of this guide, which led St. Augustine to believe the gospel, and consequently to admit every part of the canonical Scriptures, has thrown away the only means by which the faithful can be enabled, not only to distinguish the apocryphal from the sacred writings, but to ascertain the authenticity and inspiration of any single part. In fact, what possible rule can the Protestant produce, by which he can, with any certainty, pronounce that any book whatever contains the written word of God? The bible itself, and none of the books can depose in their own favour: all laws, all precepts, all external injunctions, must emanate from some authority: the resource of the private spirit is too ridiculous to be named: the authority and tradition of the Catholic church are mentioned

¹ Epist. contra Fund. loc. cit.

by Protestants, only to be held up to scorn. Where, therefore, are the marks by which the Protestant is enabled to discern the true Scripture from that which is spurious? Is internal evidence, or a critical discrimination of style, to be alleged as a ground of choice, in determining the relative merits of performances, in this important inquiry? That surely is a very equivocal mark, and subjects the inquirer to the utmost degree of uncertainty and delusion. There were false gospels and false epistles circulated among the faithful at the earliest period of Christianity: these performances, which for a time had many admirers, were suppressed by the authority of the primitive pastors. Luther, the great patriarch of "reform," exploded the Epistle of St. James in terms of indignant contempt¹: the manner in which he spoke of the Ecclesiastes, was so extremely childish, and so marked with ribaldry, that even his intimate friends were disgusted²: still both these books are held as sacred and canonical by other Protestants. The private judgment, therefore, of any individual, grounded on internal evidence, must be held a very insecure basis, on which we are to form a clear and decided opinion on a business of such transcendent importance. Is external evidence,

¹ Pref. in Epist.

² Rebenstock, tom. 2. Colloq. p. 100, et seq.

or the testimony of mankind, by which we ascribe human performances to their reputed authors, a sufficient ground to admit the authority of inspired writings? External evidence may assuredly determine the *authenticity* of a work; but what is to enable us to ascertain the doubtful question as to its *inspiration, and consequent authority*? That is a point of a higher order. Here then we may repeat St. Augustine's declaration: "I would not believe the gospel, were I not induced to do it by the authority of the Catholic church." In fact, set aside the authority of the Catholic church, and you have no dependence left, but on the various and discordant opinions of individuals; which may be as numerous as the persons who bestow any attention on the subject. By the unalterable order of human events, and by the usual progress of infidelity, doubts and discussions concerning the authenticity and inspiration of some books of the Scripture, may terminate in the fatal purpose of rejecting the whole sacred volume, as a mere human performance. The history of learning furnishes but too many instances of the fatal effects of this grand Protestant principle, by which the existence and the meaning of the sacred Scripture are subjected to private judgment. On the contrary, when the authority of the Catholic church is admitted, the voice of our Redeemer is obeyed; order is maintained; the

analogy of government is supported ; the inconveniences arising from disorder and anarchy are obviated ; all is regular, consistent, and agreeable to that subordination, which is as necessary in spiritual concerns, as in temporal government.

If, therefore, the authority of the Catholic church is the only mode of determining the authenticity and inspiration of the sacred Scriptures, and consequently of separating what is spurious from what is genuine, we have only to solicit her judgment and decision on the case. She speaks in the most distinct terms, by the voice of Christian antiquity, by her councils, and in the writings of her holy doctors. The great St. Augustine, in enumerating the parts of the sacred Scripture, makes mention of those books as canonical, which the Catholic church admits at this day¹. In the third council of Carthage, held in 397, at which this great prelate and doctor assisted, the same catalogue of sacred books is inserted, as forming the canonical Scripture². The decision of this council, though only a national council, may justly be considered as the voice of the whole church ; for it was numerously attended : Aurelius, the primate of all Africa, presided ; the illustrious St. Augustine assisted at it, and sanctioned the proceedings with his signature ; the great

¹ St. Aug. de Doctrin. Christian. lib. ii. c. 8.

² Vid. Conc. Carth. iii. c. 47.

and eminent pontiffs at that period adopted its decree on this question; and the Catholic church, in a general council, subsequently confirmed the decision¹.

In addition to these distinguished authorities, let me adduce that of the Greek church, to which the catechist is so fond of appealing, when he imagines, however erroneously, that such a plan may suit his purpose. In the various attestations, procured by the order of Lewis XIV. and published by authority, we see these books received as canonical, which the catechist regards as apocryphal and spurious. In the attestation of the seven bishops, before referred to, we have the following passage: "We affirm, that the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruc, the Maccabees, constitute a part of the holy Scripture, and are not exploded like pagan performances²." Now will the catechist, in the plenitude of his wisdom, inform me, and explain to the public, if he can, how such a portion of Christians, as constitute the Greek church, separated as they have been from the great body of the mother church for nine hundred years, let him explain how they happen to coincide with the Catholic church in communion with the see of Rome, except both parties had

¹ Vid. Carranza, fol. 85. Innocent. I. Epist. ad Exuper. Gelas. 1 Decr. de lib. sac. St. Aug. loc. cit. Isidor. Etym. lib. vi. c. 1. Cassiodor. Divin. Lect. lib. Conc. Trident. sess. 4.

² Perpet. de la Foi, loc. citato. No. 14, p. 412.

considered their belief on the subject, as a part of apostolical tradition. There could be no collusion between parties of this description : their agreement, therefore, on the catalogue of the Scriptures, forms an argument altogether irrefragable. But let us hear our *learned divine*.

I. He asserts, that the true oracles of God were delivered to the Jewish church, and that these books were not delivered as such. We grant it to be perfectly clear, that the oracles of God were delivered to the Jews ; but that these books were not delivered as such, is a point, which rests upon his unsupported assertion. These books formed not indeed a part of the Jewish canon ; but that was collected in the time of Esdras, several hundred years before some of these performances had an existence. If the Jews, from whatever reason, sturdily refused to extend their canonical books beyond the sacred number of twenty-two, that conduct ought not to influence the Catholic church, except it can be proved, that she is to be guided in her judgments by the decisions of the synagogue, or the fancies of the Jewish doctors.

II. When the catechist affirms, that these books were written by persons not inspired, he opposes his unsupported assertion to the great weight of authorities, which we have produced¹.

¹ See the observations.

III. In reply to the observations contained in the corresponding number, it may be said, that if protestants are determined to abide by the Jewish church, they thus manifest an unshaken resolution to discard the authority, which our Redeemer has established in the new law : they honour the synagogue, and disobey the church.

IV. When the catechist ascribes to the writers of these books, language not fitted to inspiration, he seems to forget similar language in books confessedly inspired. If these writers make apologies for their slender performances, and the want of polished language, for that is the amount of the acknowledgment, does not St. Paul apologize for his own *folly*, as he expresses it, and for a rude and unskilful style of writing¹?

V. The silence of the council of Laodicea, which was an obscure provincial synod, cannot invalidate the authority of the council of Carthage, in the decision of a case, subsequently sanctioned by the whole church.

VI. The catechist makes an acknowledgment that these books were read in the primitive church, for the purposes of instruction, but not for the confirmation of faith. But let the catechist know, that all the books of Scripture had not originally the same authority in the estima-

¹ See and compare Prol. of the Son of Sirach, and 2 Macc. xv. 38. with 2 Cor. xi. 1, 6.

tion of many parts of Christendom : doubts were entertained relating to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, and the Revelations of St. John : these doubts were as extensive as any that were ever conceived concerning the books in question ; yet the catechist admits these performances to be genuine Scripture. In this he acts most inconsistently ; while the Catholic follows the regular, orderly, and religious plan, laid down by Christ, of **HEARING THE CHURCH**.

VII. When he asserts, that some learned men in the church of Rome, do not admit these books as canonical, he forgets, or perhaps has to learn, that no man, however eminent or respectable, ventures to contradict the decision of a general council, on a dogmatical question, under pain of being regarded as a heathen and an unbeliever.

QUESTION XXVI.

Why do you blame the church of Rome for asserting that the church of England, once a member of her communion, had no power to reform herself?

ANSWER.

1. Because every church hath a natural right to shake off the abuses and corruptions that are contrary to the word of God.
2. It is God's command to private men, not to suffer themselves to be deluded by the sleight of men, "and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" and therefore much more is a national church concerned to do so.
3. It is the proper office of the bishops of a national church to take notice what errors creep into their churches, and to oppose them.
4. In vain was any reformation hoped for from the bishop and court of Rome, who dreaded nothing more than a reformation.
5. As the throwing off the power of the Pope of Rome was one part of the reformation; so in doing that we did not throw off obedience to a lawful sovereign, but subjection to an usurpation.
6. This reformation was not made without a precedent of former ages, when the orthodox churches, after the famous Arian councils, did set up the Nicene faith again, which those powerful councils had abolished.
7. In this reformation we made no new religion, but restored the old; and did not build a new house from the ground, but removed the rubbish which made it incommodious and unwholesome.

OBSERVATIONS.

In discussing the subject of this question, it cannot excite any surprise, that the catechist

should pervert the use of a term so familiar to a Protestant as that of reform. There is, in fact, no word that language supplies, which has been so wrested from its real meaning, as the well-known term, reformation. To reform any institution, is, in plain and intelligible language, to remove all known and acknowledged abuses, which custom, human infirmity, or any other cause, may have introduced ; and in performing this laudable task of reformation, the original institute is to be entirely preserved in its substance and spirit. Beyond this, the work of reformation must not proceed ; for in such a preposterous event, change, innovation, and, in fact, a total destruction of the original system, must necessarily take place. It should ever be kept in mind, that to change, to innovate, to destroy, are objects, not to be confounded with reform.

In this plan of rational, prudent, and laudable reform, the Catholic church, in communion with the See of Rome, has always proceeded. If the acts of all the councils, whether general or particular, be subjected to the most rigorous scrutiny, it will be found, in every instance, that the attention of the assembled fathers was by no means confined to the object, which principally occasioned the convocation of each particular council : their views were invariably directed to ulterior objects, to the correction of

abuses, to the reformation of manners, to the revival of salutary discipline. The great council of Nice met in 325, for the purpose of proscribing the Arian heresy ; and the fathers, after accomplishing that important object, and defining the Catholic doctrine on the divinity of the Son, proceeded to various questions of reform, and furnished that model of conduct, which the Catholic church has invariably followed in her subsequent councils¹. But no council, ever held in the church, has exhibited such a connected series of canons relative to reform and discipline, as the celebrated, but much calumniated, council of Trent. There is scarcely a subject of ecclesiastical discipline, which is not treated and defined in the most prudent, guarded, and exquisite manner ; and the sense is uniformly conveyed in such language, as reflects honour on those who lived at a period, when polite learning was reviving throughout Europe².

But do the efforts of those who style themselves reformers, correspond with this description ? Did *they* extend their attention to the correction of abuses, and the reformation of manners. and at the same time shew a most scrupulous regard to maintain, in its full force, the substance and spirit of the Catholic Christian insti-

¹ Vid. Conc. Nic. apud Pagi ad an. 325, Carranza, fol. 35, et seq. Fleuri, liv. xi.

² Vid. Conc. Trid. per omnia Decret. de Reformat.

tute? Did *they* adopt a prudent, pious, and religious conduct, in shewing a reverential regard for the authority established by Christ, and in leaving unmoved the landmarks, which had been respected for ages? Did *they* display the skill and discernment of wise legislators, in adopting a rule of conduct suitable to the great mass of human beings? Did *they* betray any portion of the character and spirit of apostolic men, by the sanctity of their lives, the purity of the doctrines which they taught, and the miraculous operations by which it was enforced? Alas! alas! not a particle of all this can be asserted with a shadow of truth. They withdrew themselves from that authority which Christ had established; they trampled upon the rights of the church; they introduced a heterogeneous mass of human opinions, which they called doctrine, and shewed as little disposition to maintain any agreement with each other, as with the church, which they had abandoned. The grand principle of protestantism, which they introduced, of making every man the architect of his own faith, was perfectly well calculated to flatter the natural pride of the human heart, to destroy all subordination, and to perpetuate that scene of division and discord, by which the boasted reformation has ever been distinguished.

As to the seven sacraments, which had always been deemed in the church the channels of divine

grace, and the great bonds of union, by which Christians are connected together, these *pious* doctors thought proper to reduce the number generally to two ; to treat the discarded sacraments as idle, unnecessary, and even superstitious rites, and to reduce the great sacrament of the altar to a bare commemorative rite.

If, in addition to doctrine, the lives and deaths of the reformers be carefully and dispassionately inspected, instead of finding any traces of an apostolic spirit, we shall witness some of the most dissolute, impious, and abandoned characters, that pollute the page of history¹.

As to any miraculous operation, performed by these reforming heroes, to prove the divinity of their mission, let it be deemed sufficient to refer to the well-known saying of Erasmus, that none of this ignoble tribe ever had the power of curing his lame horse.

But let us attend to our *learned monitor*, whose historical statements are just as valuable as his theological reasoning.

I. He says, that every church has a right to reform itself, and to remove abuses, that are contrary to the word of God. All this is perfectly true, provided such reform be allowed to proceed on just principles, and to be directed by known

¹ See Bossuet's Hist. des Variat. passim sed præcipue, liv. 1, 2, 6, 7.

and established laws. But when reform is made use of as a specious term to conceal innovation, change, and utter destruction, we must protest against the impious and hypocritical attempt. The reformation, so called, was not the act of the church of England reforming itself; it was a daring attempt of the civil power to change the religion of the land for interested purposes, and to remove Christianity in its original form; under which this country had flourished for nine hundred years. The church was not an acting party in this most melancholy business: the work was achieved by laymen, and completed by legislative enactments. Henry VIII. it is well known, became captivated with the charms of a young damsel, whom he wished to make his wedded wife, while his aged consort was still living; and because the Sovereign Pontiff at that period refused to admit his fictitious plea to obtain a divorce, that wicked, violent, and despotic monarch rejected an authority, which he had before revered; and from which he had derived one of the brightest jewels in his crown. Under the reign of his juvenile successor, Somerset the protector, in order to promote his own interested views, and to satisfy the rapacity of his partisans, completed the destruction of the Catholic church in this kingdom. He held forth the plausible plea of reforming the church, that he might en-

rich himself with its abundant spoils. After the short reign of Mary, her sister Elizabeth, fearing that her crown and the pontifical authority could not easily be reconciled, and willing to pursue the plan of plundering the church with more security, threw herself into the arms of the reformers, in opposition to the most solemn assurances, accompanied with the most frightful imprecations, which she had before uttered, to calm the disquietude of her sovereign and sister. This is the simple, plain, undisguised, unvarnished history of the event; confirmed by the accounts both of Catholic and Protestant historians. The church took no part in plundering itself: the "reformation," as existing at this day by the Act of 1 Elizabeth, was established in defiance of the clergy, of the convocation, and of the two universities. Even Kitchin of Landaff, whom Camden calls *the calamity of his see*, voted against the measure in the House of Lords; though he was afterwards induced to close with the designs of the court¹.

¹ Heylin's Hist. of Refor. Pref. p. 2. Hist. ad an. 1547; p. 33, 47, 48, 56, et seq.; 73, et seq.; ad an. 1558, 1559, 107, et seq. Camden, p. 28, et seq. Fuller, b. ix. Bossuet. Variat. liv. vii. Lingard's Hist. vol. vi. c. iii. edit. 8vo. et vol. vii. c. i. Ibid. c. iii. p. 329, 330.—*Note.* I feel the highest possible gratification in referring to the great work of this gentleman, as the only performance of the kind, on which a

II. The catechist records a divine command to private men, not to be deceived by *cunning and craft*; therefore he infers, that a national church ought to be more on its guard. This reasoning implies, that the event called the reformation, was an attempt on the part of the church of England, to reform itself in opposition to the craft of its enemies. This I have proved to be false, and not resting on a plausible foundation. The *sleight, cunning, and craftiness* referred to, appeared in the conduct of those, who, under the pretext of a laudable reform, sought to gratify their passions, and promote their interested views.

III. The observation in the third number labours under the same unfounded supposition. If the bishops, on the accession of Elizabeth, had not been restrained by violence from performing their duty, the change of religion would never have taken place.

IV. When the catechist states, that no reformation was to be hoped for from the Pope,

reader, solicitous for truth, can place any reliance. It really seems to me, upon the fullest consideration of the subject, that the History of England, by Dr. John Lingard, of which ten volumes 8vo. have been published, exhibits a splendid monument of historical research, literary skill, and honourable impartiality; and that it is likely to perish only with the language in which it appears.

he either involves the question in affected obscurity, or states a malicious falsehood. The pastors of the church never can, under any pretence of reform, surrender *the faith once delivered to the saints*; but as to any just and laudable reform of manners, correction of abuses, and unremitted attempts to establish salutary discipline, the Catholic church, in all her councils, has ever exhibited instances of this spirit, but particularly in the holy council of Trent¹.

V. When the catechist terms the spiritual power of the Pope an usurpation, he vilifies a point which has been before established beyond contradiction².

VI. The remark in number 6, exhibits a matchless display of ignorance and impudence, in a small compass. For the writer compares the efforts of lay reformers in England, in discarding the old faith, to the conduct of the Catholic pastors in communion with the See of Rome, in preserving the ancient doctrine inviolate. Common sense and an ordinary knowledge of ecclesiastical history, should have informed him, that the conduct of the reformers in the sixteenth century, was a complete counterpart of the achievements of the Arians in the fourth;

¹ See the preceding observations.

² See observations on Qu. xvii.

and that as those impious heretics opposed the decision of the council of Nice, at which the Pope presided by his representative, the celebrated Hosius, of Corduba ; so the *modest reformers* of the latter period, set at defiance the decisions of the council of Trent, at which the Pope presided by his legates.

VII. In this last number of the answer to the last question, the catechist appears willing to produce, by way of a final flourish, a splendid specimen of bold and unfounded assertion ; and to shew to what lengths ignorance, prejudice, and misrepresentation can be carried, he says, that the reformation did not make a new religion, but it restored the old ; that the house was not destroyed, but that the rubbish only was removed. Can any man in his sober senses make such an unfounded assertion, and convince the world of the sanity of his mind ? The church of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, governed by pastors lawfully appointed, professing a faith which is necessarily one, invariable and immutable as the God from whom it emanates ; and connected and held together by the use of the same sacraments. Now the *modest reformers* withdrew themselves from all lawful authority, made a total alteration of the faith, both in principle and substance, reduced the number of the sacraments, generally from seven to two, and abolished the

grand and adorable sacrifice of the altar, in terms of reproach, which impiety cannot exceed. If this is not a complete change of religion, we may be justified in saying, that faith never existed in the world, and that schism and heresy must be regarded as unavailing sounds.

END OF THE OBSERVATIONS.

SUPPLEMENTARY LETTER.

MY LORD,—

I AM again honoured by your earnest solicitations not to suffer my life to pass away, without leaving behind me some specimen of original composition for the instruction of mankind. My leisure, your Lordship observes, has been almost exclusively devoted to translation ; and the force, the elegance, and the taste, with which I am said to convey the thoughts of others, serve to excite your regret, that I have bestowed so little attention on the task of retailing my own. Your Lordship remarks, that a spirit of inquiry on religious subjects is afloat in the world ; and that with my store of theological and general knowledge, and with my classical attainments, I might do much good, in guiding the inquirer in his search after truth. You represent yourself as attached to the church of England, by law established, from education and from habit ; but you add, that your conviction, whatever might have been its merit or its extent, has certainly been shaken by the events which have taken place during the last twenty-five years.

Indeed, my Lord, your attention and your language are extremely flattering ; perhaps it may be said, without any violation of decorum, that in this instance your sentiments, so advantageous to

myself, are more decisive proofs of the partiality of your friendship, than of the accuracy of your judgment. By a peculiar coincidence of circumstances, your Lordship's request to have additional information on certain religious topics, and particularly on the true nature, and the real and discriminative properties of the church of Christ, has been strengthened and forwarded by an event which has taken place in my own little flock. Some time ago, a family in a neighbouring parish, consisting of a farmer, his wife, and four children, frequented my chapel for the purpose of listening to the religious instructions, which are regularly given on the Lord's day. After an attendance of some months, having acquired sufficient knowledge of the Catholic doctrine, they, apparently from a strong conviction of the truth of what they had learned, requested to be associated as members of the Catholic church, by an open profession of their faith. This circumstance could not be long concealed from the vicar of their parish ; who, though he had never troubled them before, except on the subject of tithes, and had never reproached them for their habitual neglect in attending his service, now seemed to think that the horrors of popery should call forth his most ardent zeal. He accordingly collected together several small tracts, in which the Catholic religion is disfigured, and painted in the most odious colours. With this bundle of ribaldry and falsehood, he

waited on the family, reproached them with desertion from the cause of Protestantism, retailed all that he could recollect of the charges usually urged by the vulgar on such a subject, exhorted them to read the tracts which he produced, and to retrace their steps. To all the objections urged by this gentleman, during his visit, against the Catholic doctrine and worship, a complete and satisfactory reply was given by the farmer's wife ; his statements were proved to be erroneous, his notions on different questions to be vague and unfounded, and his information altogether incorrect, and a wide deviation from the truth. In fact, an uneducated woman, instructed in the principles of the Catholic faith, silenced her clerical adversary in religious disputation. For after answering many vulgar objections usually *called* arguments, she took the higher ground, and proposed difficulties, of which the honest vicar was unable to find a solution. After a long conference he departed, leaving the tracts for the inspection of the family.

These slender performances were brought to me, and on inspecting them, I thought the whole collection unquestionably entitled—to the most profound contempt. One tract, however, consisting of questions and answers on the summary of the Catholic doctrine, contained in the profession of faith published by Pope Pius IV. appeared less exceptionable than the rest ; and on

this I have deemed it a duty to write observations at full length, with a distinct reply to each difficulty proposed. The work has increased to a considerable size ; and, together with what I intend to address to your Lordship on the subject of the church, the whole, I flatter myself, will form a compact manual of religious controversy.

In bringing this great question before your view, my Lord, it will be necessary to point out the existence of the church of Christ, as a fact, which no one gifted with reason, and in the possession of his senses, can venture to call in question ; then to establish its authority on the same ground ; and lastly, to display the properties and distinctive marks, which it bears in those sacred records, which were consigned to the care of this distinguished society. After this process, it will be extremely easy to discover, where this church is to be found.

Agreeably to the remark of Cicero, every discussion should begin with a definition of the subject under consideration, that the matter in debate may be clearly ascertained, and perfectly understood¹. The nineteenth of your articles designates the visible church as a society of faithful, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments administered agreeably to the in-

¹ Cic. de Offic. lib. i. no. 2. Omnis enim quæ a ratione suscipitur de aliquâ re institutio, debet a definitione proficisci, ut intelligatur quid sit id de quo disputatur.

stitution of Christ. That the pure word of God is preached in the church of Christ, and that the sacraments are administered agreeably to the direction of our Redeemer, can admit no doubt; but this can be known by experience to those only, who are already members of the church. This definition must consequently be deemed deficient, as affording no clue to the unlearned and the ignorant, by which they are to discover where the true church is to be found. A more just and comprehensive view of the true church of Christ may be given, when it is called *a society of men, united together by the profession of the same faith, the use of the same sacraments instituted by Christ, and by an orderly submission to the same authority divinely established.* This description of the church of Christ, it will be readily admitted, is sufficiently ample to distinguish it from every other society, and to afford to the ignorant and simple an easy means of discovering its existence. The inconveniences and the palpable deficiencies found in the definitions of the reforming doctors, are here avoided; and nothing is wanting to display to public view that visible and spiritual kingdom, which mankind had been taught to expect.

But it is here asked, is it indubitably clear, that independently of the sacred writings, such a society as is here described, can be proved to exist, with authority to teach, to instruct, and to lead mankind to eternal salvation? Yes, my Lord, it

is unquestionably true, that if the sacred Scriptures had never existed, if the commission to teach all nations, given by our Redeemer, had been confined to oral instruction, and to traditional knowledge only, we should still be constrained to admit, in the church, that authority which the Catholic Christian is bound to recognise.

In fact, my Lord, when we view the mean, the abject, the humble appearance of our ever dear and glorious Redeemer in the world ; an appearance, according to our corrupted notions, altogether disproportionate to the object of his divine mission ; when we contemplate this lowly disguise of the man of sorrows, who clothed himself with our infirmity, who bore every species of want, privation, and distress, and terminated the scene by an ignominious death ; when we contrast all these unprecedented circumstances, with certain prophecies, which the Jews carefully preserved, and permitted to be circulated among nations in the popular language of the Greeks ; when we take into our view a long series of extraordinary signs and wonders, by which the lost use of the senses was restored, the most inveterate disorders healed instantaneously, and even life recovered ; when we regard that wonder of all wonders, the raising up of Christ's sacred body from death to life, after three days ; when we consider his glorious ascension, by which ascending on high, he led captivity captive, we are lost

in admiration, and are induced to exclaim with the centurion in the gospel, *Truly this was the son of God*. Your Lordship will carefully observe, that I collect these particulars from the Scriptures, not considered as a *canonical volume*, but a common *historical record*, admitted even by the professed opponents of Christianity ; by Celsus, by Julian, by Porphyrius, and even by the incredulous Jew¹.

But let us advance farther, and consider the economy of that great work, which was to connect heaven and earth together. Our Redeemer designed to destroy idolatry, and to teach mankind to adore God in spirit and truth ; and what was the result ? The world, though plunged in the greatest excesses, soon became enamoured of the Christian religion, and embraced it with eagerness. We see recorded the wonderful revolution, by which the whole universe is induced to discard its false gods, its worship, its laws, its maxims, its opinions, its propensities, its manners, its prejudices, its customs, its usages. Our admiration increases upon us, when we take a combined view of the extent of the enterprise, of the period when it commenced, of the instruments that were employed, of the means which were resorted to,

¹ Vid. verba Cels. apud Origen. contra Cels. lib. 2. verb. Julian. apud Cyrill. lib. 6. verba Porphy. apud Euseb. Præpar. lib. 5. c. i. et Benjam. Tudel. in Itinerar.

of the obstacles that were encountered, and of the ultimate success which crowned the work.

The nature and extent of the undertaking consisted in withdrawing the whole world, learned and unlearned, Greeks, Romans, Scythians, barbarians of every description, from the worship of idols, and from the most absurd practices of superstition, which were familiar to their thoughts from the first dawn of life ; which were embodied in their education, interwoven with their habits of life, and sanctioned by power, example, authority, and custom. Truths of the most extraordinary nature were to be substituted in the place of the popular theology ; and doctrines, altogether impervious to human reason, and most humbling to human pride, were to form the basis of a new religion. The most sublime principles of morality were to be inculcated to those, in whom the natural light of reason appeared almost extinguished ; and whose immoral propensities kings and statesmen, sages and legislators, had laboured in vain to remove. This great work was to extend its influence to every nation under the sun, however separated by space, or disunited by manners and language.

The time chosen for the execution of this grand design appears to have been, in a human view, altogether unpropitious. The simple, the ignorant, and the docile, were not the characters

exclusively to be worked upon ; but all those whom knowledge, science, taste, and literature, rendered eminent, were to be encountered. It was during the polished and enlightened period of Roman greatness, that the work commenced ; when Rome was become mistress of the world, and rivalled, in literature and the arts, those nations whom she had subdued by the force and terror of her arms. The whole empire abounded with orators, poets, philosophers, and historians. Cicero had instructed and delighted the Roman world by the splendor and variety of his performances ; and Sallust had described the morals of the age in language, which fills the classical scholarat once with wonder and disgust.

To carry into effect so extensive a project, it might rationally have been expected, that the most distinguished among the Roman and Grecian sages would have been selected ; that all the powers of reasoning, and all the force of eloquence, would have been employed ; that rank and authority would have sanctioned the undertaking, and that learning would have lent its aid. But what is the fact ? The resources of human skill are utterly disregarded ; twelve poor fishermen, taken from a nation, which, at that period, was proverbially the scorn and derision of the universe, are appointed to instruct in the maxims of eternal truth the polished Greek and the haughty Roman ; to convict the sage of folly, the

man of science of ignorance, and the universe of error. Look, my Lord, at the result of this extraordinary proceeding ; see the complete success which attended the great work. In spite of every obstacle which was opposed to the progress of truth ; in defiance of the power, strength, and majesty of Rome, the disciples of the cross gained a decided triumph, and the Christian religion penetrated into countries where the terror of the Roman arms had never extended its influence.

But, it will be asked, why is this detail introduced ? The existence of the Christian religion is universally admitted, except by professed deists ; and the statements here produced are merely moral evidences, leading us to believe that God has communicated his will to man. Most assuredly they are evidences of a moral description ; but by their number, weight, and united strength, they are calculated to produce an irresistible impression. Even to the unbeliever, who remains regardless of God and eternity, they present the view of the most illustrious society of men, ever recorded in the annals of the world. Under such circumstances, no rational being can decline the evidence of such a society, or dispute the truth of the allegations which it produces. But when these moral evidences have produced their full effect, when they are combined with a knowledge of the piety of those who are sent to preach, with a view of the miracles which they perform to ren-

der their doctrine credible, with a full consideration of their incessant labours and disinterested zeal, then by the aid of that *light which enlighteneth every man, that cometh into this world*, the Christian exclaims : “ *I believe the holy Catholic church.*” He then admits not only an illustrious society of men, but a church divinely established, and divinely commissioned ; and to her decisions he submits, without reserve, in all matters relating to faith.

You will again object to the course here taken as nugatory ; because you not only admit the apostles’ creed, but the Athanasian and Nicene creeds also ; and you will add, that this is clearly expressed in your articles. I know full well, my Lord, the extent of your admissions in these matters : you admit the three creeds ; that is, you receive the words, but you leave the meaning to shift for itself. In a similar manner your calendar exhibits a long catalogue of vigils, fasts, and days of abstinence, with as much rigour as is observed in the Catholic church ; but all this totally disappears in your practice. Even your writers frequently ridicule these ancient observances as idle and superstitious. With equal consistency the Jews carefully preserve the letter of the prophecies, and leave to the Christians the task of marking the application. My Lord, to admit the words of an instrument, and to deny or overlook the natural and obvious meaning, is to build with one hand,

and to destroy with another. Of such an architect you may safely pronounce,

Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis.

The course of argument here adopted will be found upon examination to be of a most convincing nature ; for in the first place, we establish an undeniable fact, that the church of Christ, viewed not only as an illustrious society, but as invested with a divine commission, had an existence before the new Scripture was composed ; and consequently that the authority of the church was prior to the authority of any written document whatever. We thus give a clear reply to that idle calumny with which we are so frequently assailed, of proving the authority of the church from the scriptures, and again the authority of the Scriptures from that of the church.

You have therefore the authority of the Catholic church, established by the terms of the apostles' creed, which you admit ; a creed which, agreeably to the testimony of St. Augustine, St. Jerom, and other holy fathers, was composed by the apostles themselves, and preserved among the traditions of the catholic church. It is a most unquestionable fact, that the remotest antiquity has always been assigned to this important document ; and that its existence was decidedly anterior to any canonical book of the New Testament. Are you aware, my Lord, of the impor-

tance of this fact, and of the immense and inevitable consequences which flow from it? In the first place you have no knowledge of the Scripture *as a canonical book*, but from the testimony of the Catholic church; for the obvious arguments which you produce to prove its authenticity, render it, in your view, but a human performance, and will never establish its *divine inspiration*. Hence St. Augustine made the celebrated declaration so often referred to in these pages, that he would not believe the gospel, but for the authority of the Catholic church. Secondly, how are we to ascertain the meaning of the sacred writings, particularly in those parts, which have been variously interpreted. Evidently we are to resort to the authority of that church, thus divinely established, and invested with such a manifest commission from above. Thus, by reciting these words, you not only admit the existence of the church, but its divine authority, its heavenly commission, its perpetual indefectibility, its utter exemption from all error; for otherwise the distinguishing characteristic of holiness, which you ascribe to it, would prove but an empty sound.

You are to recollect, that this admission of the authority of the church is an article of faith, inserted in this document, immediately after the profession of the belief in the three divine Persons of the most adorable Trinity; that as such it is of its own nature unalterable and immuta-

ble ; that consequently the church was to teach with the same undisputed authority, till the second coming of Christ, when our Redeemer is to deliver it to his heavenly Father. This church, by the terms here employed, was to be the church of all ages and all nations ; for such is the import of the word Catholic, or universal. It was not to be confined to any one nation, or people, or kingdom, or republic ; but to be altogether unconfined both as to its extent and duration. Its commission was clearly of divine original, without any reference to the temporal sway of sovereigns, to the haughty claims of the great, or to the more dangerous influence of the people. From the genuine records of authentic history, we can state, without fear of contradiction, that, for the first three hundred years, the church, instead of being fostered with the paternal care of temporal sovereigns, was established in defiance of the majesty of imperial Rome. This event took place amidst the horrors of ten general persecutions, in which every species of suffering and torture was exhibited, to subdue the fortitude, and overcome the constancy of the Christian, without effect. *The blood of the martyr, exclaimed Tertullian, proves the seed of the Christian.*

If all this is true, my Lord, and assuredly every statement here made is incontrovertible, how has it happened, that this HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

has been the seed-plot of error? that it has been darkened by a general eclipse, which lasted for *eight hundred years and more*, and involved in one universal night every Christian nation under the sun¹? If the authority of this church has been vested in the apostles, and their lawful successors, by what unaccountable change has it taken place, that spiritual power should be claimed by civil potentates, and that a man, a boy, and a woman, should successively usurp the whole authority emanating from Christ? My Lord, these are trying questions, searching questions, tremendous questions: I leave them to your Lordship's fullest and most deliberate consideration.

Perhaps, my Lord, I may be charged with straining the meaning of this celebrated article beyond its natural and obvious import. To remove this impression, I beg leave to cite the explanation of a protestant divine, the learned Dr. Pearson, bishop of Chester. That eminent scholar, in his exposition of the ninth article of the apostle's creed, has the following passages: "When I say, *I believe the holy Catholic church*, I mean, that there is a church which is *holy* and which is *Catholic*. . . . And afterwards: "It is not only an acknowledgment of a church, which *shall be*, but also of that *which is*. That

¹ Peril of Idolatry, Part I. b. 1, ant. cit.

which was, when the creed began, and was to continue till the creed shall end, is proposed to our belief in every age *as being* ; and thus ever since the church was constituted, the church itself *as being*, was the object of the *church believing*. The existence, therefore, of the church of Christ, is the continuation of it, *in an actual being*, from the first collection of it, in the time of the apostles, unto the consummation of all things. A collection, *uninterruptedly continued* in an actual existence, of believing persons and congregations, in all ages unto the end of the world."

This author then proceeds in the following terms : " Now this is indeed a proper object of faith, because it is grounded *only upon the promise of God*. There can be no other assurance of the perpetuity of this church, but what we have from him that built it. The church is not of such a nature, as would necessarily, once begun, preserve itself for ever. Many particular churches have been wholly lost ; many candlesticks have been removed. But though the providence of God does suffer many particular churches to perish, *yet the promise of the same God will never permit, that all of them at once should perish*. When Christ spoke first particularly to St. Peter, he sealed his speech with a powerful promise of perpetuity, saying, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build*

my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. When he spoke generally to all the rest of the apostles, *Go, teach all nations, &c.*¹, he added a promise to the same effect: *and lo, I am with you all days to the end of the world.* The first of these promises assures us of the continuance of the church, *because it is built upon a rock*: the latter of these promises gives not only an assurance of the continuance of the church, but is also the cause of the continuance, which is *the presence of Christ*. Wherefore seeing Christ does promise his presence unto the church *even to the end of the world*, he does thereby assure us of the existence of the church until that time, of which his presence is the issue. Indeed, this is *the city of the Lord of Hosts, the city of our God. God will establish it for ever*; as the great prophet of the church has said, Psalm xlviii. Upon the certainty of this truth, *the existence of the church has been propounded as an article of faith in every age of Christianity*, and so it shall be still unto the end of the world."

After various other observations on the unity of the church, and the impossibility of attaining salvation out of its pale, this eminent divine adds: "Whoever, therefore, professes to believe *the holy Catholic church*, is understood to declare

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

thus much : I am fully persuaded, and make a free confession of this, *as of a necessary and infallible truth*, that Christ, by the preaching of the apostles, did gather unto himself a church, consisting of thousands of believing persons, and numerous congregations, *to which he daily added such as should be saved, and will successively and daily add unto the same to the end of the world.* So that by virtue of this all-sufficient promise, I am assured that *there was, has been hitherto, now is, and hereafter will be, as long as the sun and moon shall endure, a church of Christ, ONE AND THE SAME.* This church I believe in general *holy*, in respect to the *author, end, institution, and administration* of it. Particularly in the members here I acknowledge it to be *really* holy, and in the same hereafter *perfectly* holy. I look upon this church not like that of the Jews, limited to one people, confined to one nation ; but by the appointment and command of Christ, and by the efficacy of his assisting power, to be disseminated through all nations ; to be extended to all places ; to be propagated to all ages ; *to contain in it all truths necessary to be known ; to exact absolute obedience from all men, to the commands of Christ ;* and to furnish us with all graces necessary to make our persons acceptable, and our actions well-pleasing in the sight of God. And thus *I believe the holy Catho-*

*lic church*¹." Here then, my Lord, you have from the pen of a Protestant divine, a true description of the church of Christ, as unfolded in his explanation of the ninth article of the creed. He exhibits it in bright and splendid colours, depicting it with its properties and its characteristic marks. He displays a real and an essentially visible society, as always existing from the apostolic age, and destined to exist till the end of the world : he grounds this assertion upon the express promise of Christ, and on the assurance of his perpetual presence ; he represents this church to be *ONE and the SAME* ; to be *holy* in its author, and institution, and in its administration ; to be *holy in its actual state*, and perfectly holy in its triumphant state in the heavenly Jerusalem. He says with truth, that it is not confined to one nation, but that it is extended to all places, and propagated to all ages ; that *it contains all truths necessary to be known, and that it exacts obedience from all men to the commands of Christ*. Indeed if these characteristic traits, specified by this distinguished divine, be compared with the various passages of the sacred writings, in which the church of Christ is clearly designated—passages, which have been so often referred to in these pages ; if we reflect,

¹ See Pearson's Exposition of the Apostles' Creed, on the whole Ninth Article, 334—351. Edit. 1701.

that Christ has decidedly promised, that it should be built on a rock, and favoured with his special aid and presence to the end of time ; that the Divine Spirit should teach it all truth for ever ; that those who should refuse to hear the church should be treated as heathens and unbelievers ; if we advert to the declarations of St. Paul on the subject, who assures us that there is *one Lord, one faith, one baptism*, and that the church is the pillar and foundation of truth ; if we take a full and comprehensive view of these proofs and illustrations of this matter ; we shall remain fully convinced, that Dr. Pearson has not strained the meaning of the words, *I believe the holy Catholic church* ; but that he has furnished a clear, full, and solid elucidation. We shall thus be led to form a just and natural conclusion, that therefore there always has existed on earth, and that there will exist to the end of time, a society, called the church, professing one faith, holy in its doctrine and worship ; extended over all nations, and deriving its pedigree from the apostles ; an unerring guide in all matters of faith ; and in the spiritual concerns of salvation justly claiming the respect, and authoritatively exacting obedience from all those who wish to belong to Christ.

If what is here written be compared with the preceding remarks on the performance of the catechist, particularly with the observations on

the 16th and 23d questions, it will be found that the characteristic marks of the true church of Christ, as contained in the sacred volume, are in these pages fully and amply delineated. It therefore only remains to make a due application of the doctrine laid down, and to ascertain with precision, to what class of religionists the claim of being the one and true church of Christ may be said exclusively to belong. This is unquestionably the most important inquiry, that can be brought under discussion, as the consequences involved in it, are not temporal, but eternal.

Cras ingens iterabimus æquor.

HOR.

I. If, from all that has been written in the present address, as well as from the preceding observations on the performance of the catechist, it is incontestibly clear to your Lordship, that Christ *always* had a church on earth, and that he *always* will have *one* church to the end of time, I appeal to your own good sense and candour to decide the merit of the case between the Catholic church and the reforming doctors. Protestantism, my Lord, under any of its diversified forms, was never heard of in the world, till fifteen hundred years after the coming of Christ : it is consequently a complete novelty, as a system of religion ; it came too late to establish a shadow of a claim to be the religion introduced by our Redeemer. We know its origin ; we can trace

its progress ; we can mark its countless variations ; we see the weak and flimsy foundation on which it stands. Human pride, human passion, human propensities, presided at its birth, fostered its infancy, matured its growth, and confirmed its strength. The two great patriarchs of reform, Luther and Calvin, both candidly acknowledge, that they separated from the *WHOLE WORLD*¹. Will your Lordship inform me, by what logic, either natural or artificial, a system of religion, called *the reformed faith*, adopted under such circumstances, and introduced at so late a period, can claim to be the religion of Christ? Will your Lordship venture to affirm, after acknowledging the existence of a church, founded by Christ, and destined to last from his first to his second coming, that a conventicle, whether provincial or national, or a collection of such conventicles, independent of each other, can, by any construction of language, be pronounced to be the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church ; a church founded full fifteen hundred years before they saw the light? You will immediately be reduced to exclaim :

— Credat Judæus Apella,
Non ego.

No man, in his sober senses, and with any re-

¹ Loc. cit.

gard to character, consistency, and truth, can venture to make so bold an assertion.

The prescription of fifteen hundred years forms a title of no inconsiderable duration ; a title, which has often been assailed, and has as often remained unhurt after the severest conflicts. If Tertullian, about two hundred years after Christ, could set up the claim of prescription against Marcion, Apelles, and various heretics of his time, this same claim will assuredly not lose any portion of its weight and strength after a lapse of fifteen hundred years. If the Catholic church in the days of that father had not forfeited its credit and respectability, when it could boast an existence of a comparatively short date, the lengthened period of fifteen hundred years should surely have been deemed a bar to all foreign and adventitious claims whatever. I will cite at length the passage, to which I allude, from Tertullian ; with whose strong sense and African roughness of style, I was the first to make your Lordship acquainted, by putting into your hands an edition of the *Apologetic*, and of the *Prescriptions* by the Abbé de Gourcy, accompanied with his excellent translation of those celebrated pieces. This illustrious father represents the Catholic church holding this language to the heretics of his time : “Who are you ? and when and whence did you come ? What have you to do in my domains, who are none of mine ? On

its progress; we can mark its conditions; we see the weak and flimsy foundations which it stands. Human pride, but human propensities, presided at its birth, its infancy, matured its growth, and its strength. The two great patriarchs, Luther and Calvin, both of knowledge, that they separated from *WORLD*. Will your Lordship in what logic, either natural or artificial of religion, called *the reformed* under such circumstances, and in late a period, can claim to be Christ? Will your Lordship venture after acknowledging the existence founded by Christ, and destined first to his second coming, that whether provincial or national, or such conventicles, independent can, by any construction of language, be pronounced to be the one, holy, catholic church; a church founded a hundred years before they saw the immediately be reduced to exclusion.

— Credat Judæus
Non ego.

No man, in his sober sense

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their descendants, are statements of Catholic have been noticed and pages.

beyond contradiction, *reformed faith*, is set up in positive right of the Catholic omn assurances of God an undeniable consequence of the reformed them in particular, can be considered THE HOLY nated in the apostles' church built, supported, leemer, evidently can-error; and therefore form of her doctrine: may fail, yet the persistently with the di-whole body of pastors is thus undertaking to church, in defiance of tained in the Scripture, every act, to be wholly by which the church of nguished.

ed churches can thus claim, much less can they, either dually, be considered the CA-The Catholic church, my Lord,

what possible ground, Marcion, dost thou dismantle my forest? By what assumed authority, Valentinus, dost thou divert the course of my waters? By what title, Apelles, dost thou remove my land-marks? The domain is mine: why do you wantonly sow and feed on another's ground? It is my property; I am the ancient possessor; I am the first possessor; I can trace my unshaken titles to the original proprietors; I inherit from the apostles, and I enjoy the inheritance agreeably to their testamentary precautions, and the official solemnity of their sacred behests. As to you, you are certainly discarded, and disinherited for ever, as aliens, as enemies." That your Lordship may be convinced, that this passage from Tertullian is given as literally as the respective idioms of the language will admit, I will subjoin the original text in a note; imploring you to say with your hand upon your heart as a Christian, and decidedly upon your honour as a peer, whether the same language cannot be employed by the Catholic church to the reformers, with more than tenfold force¹.

¹ Ad quos meritò dicendum est, qui estis? quando et unde venistis? Quid in meo agitis, non mei? Quo denique, Marcion, jure silvam meam cædis? Quâ licentiâ, Valentine, fontes meos transvertis? Quâ potestate, Apelles, limites meos commoves? Mea est possessio: quid hîc cæteri ad voluntatem vestram seminatis et pascitis? Mea est possessio, olim possideo, prior possideo, habeo origines firmas, ab ipsis auctoribus quorum fuit res: Ego sum hæres Apostolorum: Sicut

II. I am fully aware, my Lord, that to evade the force of this irrefragable argument of prescriptive possession, pleaded by the Catholic church, no ingenuity is left unemployed, no art remains untried, no sophistry is spared. The corruptions of popery are sung in the most impassioned strains ; the charges of superstition, of blasphemy, of idolatry and infidelity, are made with the most solemn assurance ; the church of England, by law established, in order to justify the event, called reform, imputes a general apostacy to the whole of Christendom without exception¹. But see with what facility these flimsy statements are overturned, these cobwebs are dispersed in the air. If these atrocious accusations possessed the smallest weight, and obtained the slightest credit, what would become of the solemn promises of God himself, who clearly predicted, that no such consequences should ensue? If the Almighty declared, by the prophet Ezekiel, that in the future kingdom of Christ, his people should not *defile themselves any more with their idols*², why, in the name of heaven, is the odious charge of idolatry produced? If our Redeemer assured us, that the

caverunt testamento suo, sicut fidei commiserunt, sicut adjuraverunt, ita teneo : vos certe exhaeredaverunt semper et abdicaverunt, ut extraneos, ut inimicos. Tertull. de Præscript. c. 37.

¹ Loc. cit.

² Ezek. xxxvii. 23.

Holy Spirit should teach **ALL TRUTH FOR EVER**, with what shadow of reason can any species of religious error be imputed to the **WHOLE church** ? If Christ has promised his special presence to his church to the **END OF THE WORLD**, for the obvious purposes of protection and support, if he has pronounced, in terms not to be misconceived, that all the malignant efforts of hell shall never overturn his spiritual kingdom ; if upon these grounds St. Paul could denominate the church, the **PILLAR AND FOUNDATION OF TRUTH**, why do these *modest, these pious reformers*, proceed so far as to assert, that the church has been convulsed to its foundations ; that the spiritual edifice has been completely dismantled ; that hell has triumphed over the solemn promises of Christ ; that his sacred words have proved to be but an empty boast ; and that where we were taught to look up for truth, piety, and religion, there we have witnessed the reign of error, superstition, and idolatry ? It is thus clear, beyond all doubt, that the grand plea of " reform " is set up in direct opposition to the promises of God and our Redeemer, and that it cannot, for one moment, obtain any credit with those who justly and piously believe, that the flimsy pretext of error must vanish before the solemn assurances of the Deity. I will only add, on this part of the subject, that all the vile and abominable charges produced by the " reformers " in the sixteenth

century, and adopted by their descendants, are nothing more than misstatements of Catholic doctrine, most of which have been noticed and refuted in the preceding pages.

III. If it is thus clear beyond contradiction, that what is called *the reformed faith*, is set up in opposition to the prescriptive right of the Catholic church, and the solemn assurances of God himself, it will follow by an undeniable consequence, that neither the collection of the reformed churches, nor any one of them in particular, can state any pretensions to be considered **THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH**, designated in the apostles' creed. The holy Catholic church built, supported, and protected by our Redeemer, evidently cannot fall into any religious error ; and therefore cannot admit of any reform of her doctrine : though particular churches may fail, yet the providence of God cannot, consistently with the divine promises, permit the whole body of pastors to go astray. The persons thus undertaking to reform the holy Catholic church, in defiance of the solemn assurances contained in the Scripture, prove themselves, by the very act, to be wholly destitute of that sanctity by which the church of Christ is ever to be distinguished.

If none of the reformed churches can thus claim to be the holy church, much less can they, either collectively or individually, be considered the **CATHOLIC CHURCH**. The Catholic church, my Lord,

is that noble and splendid kingdom established by Christ ; a kingdom not of this world ; necessarily professing one faith ; for truth is essentially one, and God cannot teach two opposite and discordant systems of belief. Agreeably to the import of the Greek term, the universality of this one church must extend to time and place ; it is doomed to last from its original establishment by our Redeemer, till the period when he is to come to judge the world. It was to extend to every country and every clime under heaven ; all nations, and people, and tongues, were to feel its genial influence. If your Lordship will take the pains to inspect the various texts, characterising this spiritual kingdom of Christ, already cited from the Scripture in the progress of this work, you will find that this character of Catholicity so peculiarly belongs to it, that it is evidently and clearly distinguished from all separate and particular congregations by this mark alone. Let it be remembered, that God promised to Abraham that in his seed *all the nations* of the earth should be blessed¹ ; that he renewed this same promise to Isaac ; that of the extent and universality of this spiritual kingdom, the scriptural prophecies are literally full ; that Isaiah predicted that the nations should flow to the church² ; that the royal prophet sang in exalted strains of the apostles,

¹ Gen. xxii. 18.

² Ch. ii. v. 2.

that their sounds went forth unto all the earth, and their words to the ends thereof¹; that all the families of the earth were to turn to the Lord²; that our Redeemer ordered his apostles to teach *all nations*³; and that he declared, in the most explicit terms, that penance and the remission of sin should be preached to *all nations*⁴. In these labours he clearly promised to support them and their successors, to the end of the world⁵. Now will any man, who employs his reasoning powers, dare to assert, that any national church, or provincial conventicle, unheard of till sixteen hundred years after Christ, confined but to one spot, and utterly unconnected with all religionists in the world, can possibly be this great spiritual kingdom, this universal church, predicted by the prophets, established by Christ, and destined to enlighten all nations to the end? These grand and characteristic traits do not belong to the church of England, by law established; of which the great controversial poet justly said:

To foreign lands no sound of her is come;
Humbly content to be despised at home.

DRYDEN'S *Hind and Panther*, Part 2.

In fact, my Lord, you agree in faith with no church in the universe; you are wholly dependent upon the civil power, and recognize no spe-

¹ Ps. xviii. 4, al. 19.

² Ibid. xxi. 28. al. xxii. 27.

³ Matt. xviii. 19.

⁴ Luke xxiv. 47.

⁵ Matt. xxviii. 20.

cies of jurisdiction in your church, spiritual or civil, which does not emanate from the crown. Such a church cannot be **THE CHURCH** of all ages and all nations ; and what is justly said of the national church, unconnected as she is with any other, is equally applicable to every separate conventicle in the universe. These arguments St. Augustine successfully employed in the fourth century against the Donatists, who used the same plea as the modern reformers ; and if these topics possessed any force in one instance, the lapse of fourteen centuries has not diminished their weight in the other¹.

Perhaps, my Lord, you will urge, with many modern writers and speakers on the subject, that though the church of England alone, or any other sect, viewed separately, cannot be denominated the church, yet that all of them together may be considered the people of God ; united as they are in the possession of the leading points of the Christian doctrine. In opposition to this latitudinarian system, it is observable, that all classes of persons, separated from the Roman Catholic church, assume unlimited freedom in devising their own articles of belief, without regard to any authority whatever ; that accordingly, what is called *the reformed faith*, is split into an infinite variety of divisions on the most material points,

¹ See St. Augustine's excellent *Treatise de Unitate Eccles. contra Donatist. passim.*

the divinity of the Son not excepted ; and that among them there is neither unity, nor principle of unity. Does your Lordship for one moment suppose, that this various and discordant belief can come from the God of truth ? that he can sanction this confusion of Babel, and that he can reveal to one party what he condemns in another as untenable ? No, my Lord, he cannot ; truth, as I before observed, is essentially one ; and St. Paul more emphatically and decidedly assures us, that there is one Lord, ONE FAITH, one baptism. The spirit of God cannot reveal to the Arian and to the Socinian, that Christ is but a pure creature ; and at the same time decidedly teach the other classes of Christians the reverse of this doctrine ; he cannot teach you, as a member of the church of England, that a doubtful and variable doctrine concerning the Eucharist may be held with safety, while he uniformly teaches me, by the voice of pastors lawfully succeeding the apostles, that one constant and invariable belief has ever prevailed in the church, on this as well as other matters of faith. This wild and extravagant system of forming a church of such discordant materials, must therefore be abandoned.

IV. But if your Lordship can endure to see the whole system of reform dispatched at a single blow, attend, if you please, to the following considerations. Every undertaking, in which the interests of others are involved, must proceed from

due authority ; all interference, even in the concerns of a private family, without the sanction of the head, are justly deemed an intolerable assumption of power. What judgment should we form either of the intellect or modesty of the man, who should enter your Lordship's ample domain, and arrogate to himself the care of your splendid establishment, without your approbation and consent ? In the greater affairs of public life, no man takes upon himself the important business of commanding in the army or the navy ; no one attempts to preside in a court of justice, without the express authority of the supreme power of the state. The necessity of a commission to command, to rule, to hold a responsible situation in the church, is equally indispensable : and surely to reform a church would demand a commission in the most explicit and ample form. The church is a society of divine original, established by Christ ; and must absolutely adhere to that form of government which he framed, and preserve that mode of transmitting ecclesiastical authority which he devised. Even in speaking of himself, our Redeemer says distinctly : *I AM NOT COME OF MYSELF, but he that SENT ME is true, whom ye know not. But I know him, FOR I AM FROM HIM, AND HE HATH SENT ME*¹. And at the resurrection of Lazarus, our Redeemer thanks his heavenly Father for hearing him, and adds : *And I know thou hearest*

¹ John vii. 28, 29.

*me always ; but because of the people which stand by I said it, THAT THEY MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME*¹. On this obvious principle of the indispensable necessity of a mission, the apostles never ventured to preach till they had received an ample commission to perform that sacred office. *As my Father SENT ME, even so I SEND YOU*². And again : *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. GO YE, THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS*³. Hence St. Paul, who assuredly understood the intention of Christ, introducing the mention of the preachers of the word, asks : *How shall they preach, except they BE SENT*⁴? A true and authorised mission is therefore necessary to all pastors, in order to instruct others in the will of God ; and this must proceed either from God himself, or from those who lawfully act in his name. On this ground Tertullian, in a passage already cited, asks the heretics of his days : “ Who are you ? when and whence did you come⁵ ? ” And St. Cyprian, speaking of Novatian, says : “ He is not in the church, nor can he be accounted a bishop, because, despising apostolical tradition, he came of himself, and succeeded to nobody⁶. ”

If it is therefore incontestably clear, both from

¹ John xi. 41, 42.

² Ibid. xx. 21.

³ Ma'tt. xxviii. 18, 19.

⁴ Rom. x. 15.

⁵ Tertull. loc. cit.

⁶ St. Cypr. Epist. 76. circ. init. edit. Pamel.

Scripture, from apostolical tradition, from the invariable analogy of governments, and from the common sense and usage of mankind, that a commission from God is necessary, in order to perform the work of God : let me now triumphantly ask, WHAT MISSION of any species or description could the reformers ever produce, to justify their extraordinary proceedings ? If Christ himself did not come without being sent ; if the apostles did not plant the gospel, without a peculiar order to engage in that holy enterprise, what could justify *those pious and modest personages*, not only in preaching without authority, but in changing, innovating, and destroying, under the specious pretext of reform ? St. Paul tells the Galatians, that if an angel from Heaven should preach a different doctrine, from what he had delivered, he was to be considered as accurst¹. But these reforming individuals, it appears, did not justify themselves by so high an authority : if we are to believe the admissions of Luther and Zuinglius, a prompter from the infernal abyss had a great share in their proceedings².

It is apparent, that if any mission could have been produced to justify their achievements, it must have been either of *an ordinary*, or of *an extraordinary* kind ; it must have been derived

¹ Gal. i. 8.

² Luther. Epist. ad Elect. Sax. vol. v. edit. Jen. p. 485. it. tom. fol. 77. it. Conc. Dom. Premisit. fol. 19.

either from the regular pastors of the church, or it must have been a commission, duly proved to have proceeded from above. But no commission of either kind could the "reformers" ever exhibit to their admirers. The pastors of the church never gave to those individuals an authority to alter the faith and discipline, and to dissolve the whole frame of ecclesiastical government: the church never allowed her own children to stigmatise the religion of the whole Catholic world, as a *superstitious, idolatrous, damnable, bloody, traitorous, blind, blasphemous religion*, and thus to load it with the severest terms of reproach, which language can supply.

If it be asked whether the "reformers" may not have had an extraordinary mission, it must be observed, that such a mission must be evinced by a singular sanctity of manners, by consummate purity of doctrine, and assuredly by the gift of miracles. When Moses was deputed by Almighty God to deliver the children of Israel from their painful and protracted slavery, he proved his mission by extraordinary signs and wonders: even our Redeemer himself declares of the Jews, that if he *had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin*¹. Thus nothing short of a decided gift of miracles could nationally induce mankind to bestow the smallest attention or the proceedings of those self-consti-

¹ John xv. 24.

tuted teachers. Now as to any miraculous operation, that never formed a subject of their pious exultation ; and as to the supposed purity of their doctrines, and the sanctity of their manners, I request your Lordship's deliberate attention to the authentic and unquestionable account, given by the learned and eloquent Bishop of Meaux, in order to be convinced, that men more impious, and doctrines more extravagant, never appeared in the world¹.

Indeed, my Lord, on this delicate and critical subject of a divine mission, Luther himself gave the cause of "reform" a mortal blow, by the manner in which he treated the Anabaptists ; whose furious proceedings were directed by the artifice and enthusiasm of Muncer. When that disciple of Luther began to dogmatize on his own account, and to depart from the instructions of his master, the grand patriarch of "reform" directed that he should not be examined upon the substance of his doctrine, but that he should be required to produce his commission to teach. If he should answer that it came immediately from God, then, added Luther, *let him prove it by a manifest miracle ; for by such signs and prodigies does God usually declare his will, when he designs to make any change in the usual form of bestowing a mission.* Thus

¹ See Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes, liv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

did this arch reformer condemn his own proceedings by his own declaration ; and Muncer pursued his course ¹.

If it be alleged, that in the church of England, by law established, there exists a clear commission to teach, to preach, to confer the sacraments, and to perform the duty of good pastors, because such a commission proceeds from the throne, that plea brings the whole question to a decided issue. As the civil power rests upon the same foundation in all countries, this mode of reasoning, if it possessed any force, would prove that the Koran is published with as due and legitimate an authority in the dominions of Turkey, as the Gospel is in any Christian state. But let it never be forgotten, that the power, by which the church of Christ is governed, proceeds from him through his apostles, and their legitimate successors only. Those founders of the Christian religion never applied to the Roman emperors, to the consuls, the prætors, or to any civil agents whatever, for a commission to teach ; they acted by virtue of the divine mission, which they had received from their heavenly master. The only legitimate interference of civil governors in ecclesiastical concerns, was when, at subsequent periods, they assumed and preserved the character of protectors and defenders of the church. Any mission, therefore, to teach,

¹ Sleidan, lib. 5.

to instruct, and to perform the whole circle of pastoral duties, either derived from the people, or from the highest authority of the state, can be considered only as *a civil license* ; and, of its own nature, cannot contain an atom of that spiritual authority, which Christ bequeathed to his church. The consequences of this undeniable statement, my Lord, as affecting *a lawful ministry, and a succession* of lawful ministers, are so obvious and inevitable, that I mean not to insult your understanding, by dwelling any longer on this point.

V. If your Lordship is convinced, that the cause of "reform," in any of its branches, was an unauthorized act, and not sanctioned by a divine mission, it is fully as clear, that the rule of faith, introduced to uphold Protestantism, is equally unfounded, and fraught with every species of danger. By comparing your sixth with your nineteenth article, I collect that Scripture alone, without note or comment, is your rule of faith: indeed your writers very generally agree in this doctrine ; though to maintain your ground against the Dissenters, it is ludicrous to observe how you recur to us to supply you with weapons. The declaration of a late bishop¹, to which your Lordship first called my attention, proceeds to still greater lengths ; for he roundly asserts, that *Protestantism consists in believing what we please*,

¹ Watson.

and in professing what we believe. But is not this a free avowal, that divine faith, *without which it is impossible to please God*, forms no part of Protestantism? that the religion of Protestants is made up of a discordant mass of opinions, which no guide can direct, and no authority can restrain? and that your rule of faith does not deserve that dignified appellation?

My Lord, I am now writing with unreserved confidence to an hereditary legislator, and to an hereditary guardian of law; and I must presume, that by your noble descent, by the excellence of your education, and the variety of your attainments, by habit and a constant attention to pursuits becoming your rank, you are a competent judge of the measures to be taken to preserve order in civil society. Let me suppose, and pardon the singular supposition, that some noble lord should gravely rise in his place in your house, and detail the outlines of a bill, in which he should propose a plan for assimilating the use of law in future, to the rule of faith adopted by the church of England. He would be led to observe, that all traditional customs are now reduced to statute law; that the laws are all perfectly clear in needful points, and require no comment, no gloss, no ingenious observations of counsel, no dignified illustrations of learned judges; that the people themselves, even those who cannot read, are qualified to find the real meaning of the law on

every subject, and to settle their own disputes without the intervention of professional agents ; that these remarks are peculiarly applicable to all differences relating to tithes, as the subject so frequently comes under discussion, and the little altercations between pastors and people, may as easily be composed, as any dispute concerning a text in Scripture. He should therefore propose, that all the statute laws should be compressed into the smallest compass possible ; that cheap and stereotype editions of the laws thus abridged should be procured ; that constitutional societies should be encouraged to disseminate legal knowledge at a cheap rate, with an occasional tract, to explain any extraordinary difficulties that might possibly occur. Thus would every man become his own lawyer ; peace and harmony would gradually be promoted, and legal chicanery would be unknown in our happy land. Our judges might then be converted into generals, and our distinguished barristers into staff-officers : as to our attornies and solicitors, with a numerous train of dependants, they might be distributed, according to their merit, among our armies and fleets, to defend the liberties and independence of their country. If, during the exposure of such a plan, your Lordship should observe me, with certain friends of ours below your bar, you would be induced waggishly to exclaim :

Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici?

Truly ludicrous would the bare mention of such a proposal appear in your dignified assembly ; but tell me, my Lord, would it be more ridiculous than the uniform plan pursued by Protestants, of circulating the Scriptures indiscriminately among all classes of society, and of making each individual the architect of his own faith ? If property, with every attendant blessing, confined to the present life, is guarded with so much care, is not left to individual opinion and fancy, but is consigned to the laborious efforts of a learned profession, in which there is a gradation of authority ; if, to terminate all disputes, and to prevent the consequences of eternal litigation, there is a tribunal to pronounce in the last resort, let me ask, is the sacred deposit of faith, of which the influence reaches to an eternity, to be treated with less ceremony, to be left to uncertainty and hazard, to be exposed to the fluctuations which the ever-varying opinions of individuals may produce ? If human laws are explained and enforced with authority, divine laws assuredly demand the same security and protection. For what other reason did our Redeemer command the church to be heard, under the severest penalties ? for what other purpose do we witness the appointment of apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors, but that we may not be carried away with every wind of doctrine, and follow our own fancies and judgments, instead of adhering to the faith of Christ ? Why

are we told, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation, and that the unlearned and the unstable wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction, but that we may not adopt the dangerous expedient of private judgment in determining scriptural truths ; an expedient, which you make your sole rule of faith. You see, my Lord, that this pretext of honouring the sacred Scripture, is an open violation of its most sacred injunctions ; that your plan is no rule of faith ; that it is destructive of all faith, of all order ; that it is contrary to the analogy of all government, and calculated to introduce universal disorder and confusion in religious belief. The imaginary proposal, to which I have alluded, of subjecting all law to the interpretation of individuals, would not be more extravagant in the state, than the adoption of this grand Protestant principle has proved to be in the concerns of the church.

It would be easy to carry our reflections on this subject much farther ; and to show, that this pretended rule of faith is not followed by Protestants themselves ; that in many instances they will not suffer it to be followed, as is clearly evinced from the proceedings of the Protestant synod of Dort ; that a compliance with it is absolutely impracticable ; that it completely destroys all supernatural faith ; that it introduces nothing but uncertainty and doubt in matters of religion ; that it fosters the pride and arrogance so natural to human be-

ings ; and that it has a direct tendency to promote schism, heresy, infidelity, and atheism. All this it would be easy to prove ; but having already discussed many of these topics, particularly in my observations on the fifth question proposed by the catechist, I forbear any farther remarks on this part of the subject, from an apprehension of exciting disgust by an unnecessary repetition.

VI. I will, however, take the liberty of pointing out the effects of this boasted rule of faith, among those reforming doctors themselves : and I will ask, what has been the direct consequence resulting from this preposterous mode of deciding matters of faith ? What else can be looked for, my Lord, but that which follows in the unalterable order of things ? If you place the law in the hands of individuals, with full power to adjust their own disputes, you establish a bank of disorder and disunion, on which every man will deem it a right very largely to draw : and if you commit the ultimate decision of divine truth to private judgment, what can you expect to witness, but that invariable fluctuation and change, by which Protestantism has ever been distinguished. If Luther thought proper to dogmatize and innovate, the disciples of Luther would naturally think themselves entitled to the same liberty. Accordingly, we find that this consequence has invariably taken place. The great

patriarchs of reform founded various sects, widely different from each other in faith and worship ; and each party soon altered its own belief. The celebrated Confession of Ausbourg, on occasion of which you assumed your new denomination of Protestant, was framed in 1529, and shortly after was presented to the emperor Charles V. ; but immediately on its appearance, it was modified by Melancthon. Luther, not satisfied with this performance, drew up the articles of Smalkalde ; but this latter attempt proving unsatisfactory to the party, the Confession of Saxony made its appearance ; and afterwards the two Confessions of Wittemberg¹. The other branches of reform have not been less prolific in variation, than the parent stock. If you follow their history with ordinary observation, you constantly witness new confessions of faith, and fresh attempts to unite those in belief, who, by the nature of things, are in a state of irreconcilable separation. Such has been the nature of heresy in every age ; such was the history of Arianism ; and such was the character of heretics given by Tertullian, in a passage which deserves to be inserted. Speaking of heretics of his time, he says : “ I am guilty of a great departure from truth, if they are not perpetually changing their own principles ; each person modifies, according to his own fancy,

¹ Hist. des Variat. pref. No. 13.

the doctrines which he has received, and imitates the liberty of the founder of his sect. The progress of heresy unfolds its nature, and the character of its origin. What was done by Valentinus, was deemed lawful for his followers; what was practised by Marcion, was justifiable authority to his disciples; they assumed the privilege of new modelling their faith by the dictates of their own fancy¹." I need not observe to your Lordship, what is obvious to the meanest capacity, that variation and change in matters of faith are the essential features of falsehood; but that truth, which is of divine original, is necessarily one and the same. If your Lordship really wishes to see the true character of Protestantism drawn by a masterly hand, I seriously advise you to read, with all possible attention, the history of the variations of the Protestant churches, by the learned and eloquent Bishop of Meaux. Had I not made in your presence, and at your request, a species of a classical vow to produce no more translations, I would present this great work to

¹ Tertull. Præscrip. c. 42. Mentior si non etiam a regulis suis variant inter se, dum unusquisque proinde suo arbitrio modulatur quæ accepit, quemadmodum de suo arbitrio ea composuit ille qui tradidit. Agnoscit naturam suam, et originis suæ morem, profectus rei. Idem licuit Valentinianis quod Valentino, idem Marcionitis quod Marcioni, de arbitrio suo fidem innovare.

the English reader in a new dress. I hope it will be undertaken by some literary man, who will do justice to that inimitable performance.

VII. My Lord, will it not inevitably follow, from all that has been said, that the Reformation is a pompous term, which has been grossly misapplied, and used in a manner insulting to the understandings of mankind? If these pretended fathers of reform had been invested with any authority to correct abuses, they should have preserved the deposit of faith inviolate, they should have removed the abuses complained of, and have introduced a thorough reformation of manners. This was the plan always pursued by the Catholic church: she was always solicitous to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; to leave untouched the ONE FAITH, and to labour incessantly at the task of maintaining salutary discipline. But were these the laudable objects of the reformers? Far, very far otherwise. They altered the faith, changed the worship, completely relaxed the discipline: by submitting all disputes ultimately to the Scriptures, as explained by the private judgment of the parties, they raised a bar to all order, and rendered disunion perpetual. The immediate actors in the scene, and their apologists, witnessed with deep regret the consequences of their own measures, and the rapidly increasing depravity which prevailed:

they appeared appalled and ashamed at the result of their own proceedings. Let Luther, Melancthon, Burnet, Strype, Heylin, and other partisans of "reform," be believed, when they record their own melancholy tale¹. This boasted event must therefore be deemed a melancholy proceeding, even by the confession of the actors themselves and their devoted admirers.

Habemus confitentes reos.

VIII. But what shall we say to the uniform mode, which from the public appearance of Luther, in 1517, to the present hour, has been adopted by Protestants to injure the Catholic church, and swell their own numbers. Instead of resorting to fair argument, solid learning, and polite and charitable language, in discussing subjects so interesting to mankind, these champions of "reform" have, in most instances, employed little else in support of their cause, but misrepresentation, falsehood, calumny, and the most vulgar and virulent abuse, against the professors of the old religion. Of these unmanly and ignoble practices, the writings of Luther and Calvin are full². The same spirit has infected their descendants; it is an original stain,

¹ See some of these authorities compiled by Mr. Butler, in his masterly and admirable reply to Dr. Southey, 172—178.

² Vid. opera Luther. et Calv. passim.

which has tainted the whole posterity. In our own country, this base and antichristian mode of attack has ever been made the test of orthodoxy, the indication of honest zeal, the road to preferment. Publications of all kinds abound with instances of these sordid arts, from the grave expositions of the sacred Scripture, to the smallest tracts circulated among the lowest orders of society: idolatry, superstition, blasphemy, with ten thousand other odious charges, are perpetually repeated. In this ignoble manner is treated that church, which twice rescued this country from the horrors of paganism; which founded all those ecclesiastical establishments, that Protestants so fondly cherish; a church, which, for nine hundred years, secured to this country all the peace, tranquillity, comfort, respectability, and splendour, which it enjoyed. These statements are facts of public notoriety: and whence can a spirit so opposite to Christian charity, proceed? Not from above; consequently a religion, which is propagated by these mean and disingenuous arts, cannot be the religion of Christ.

But—Peace to all such—*Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo*—let us turn, my Lord, from this disgraceful scene, and view the titles, which the mother church exhibits to the veneration and confidence of mankind.

I. In the first place, let us consider the antiquity of that body of believers, in communion

with the See of Rome. It must ever be deemed incontestably clear, that if a society of faithful can trace its origin to the apostles and to Christ, and can shew the period when private sects, and self-constituted conventicles, were formed by an open separation from such a society; a body thus displaying its antiquity and connexion with the apostles, proves the truth of its doctrine, and the novelty and falsehood of the opinions, adopted by such as are without its pale. If it be asked, whether the Catholic church, commonly called the Roman Catholic church, on account of its communion with the See of Rome, can really trace its origin to the apostolic times, I answer decidedly, that it can; and that the foul charges, and the admissions of its bitterest enemies, place this fact beyond contradiction. It is said, in the celebrated passage from the homilies, so often referred to in this work, that *the whole of Christendom, for more than eight hundred years, had been drowned in the most abominable idolatry*; the obvious meaning of which is, that the religion of the Pope, professed by the whole of Christendom, and thus loaded with infamy, can be traced to the period, when St. Gregory the Great converted this island from paganism; about nine hundred years before the "reformation." The blind and fanatical zeal, which dictated this foul passage, did not permit its authors to see, that they were attesting the antiquity of

the Roman Catholic church ; much less were they aware, that they were casting the bitterest reproach upon their Redeemer, who, notwithstanding all his magnificent and splendid promises to protect his church to the end of time, had suffered it to fall, according to these teachers, into disorders, which, after nine hundred years, called for their charitable aid.

By this admission, therefore, so singularly conveyed, we have the avowal of our bitterest adversaries, that the Roman Catholic religion, nick-named popery, was the religion which St. Gregory the Great introduced into this country by his missionaries, in 597. Now let us see, whether, by a decisive proof, which can admit of no contradiction, we cannot trace its existence to a more remote period of Christianity. By the 1 Eliz. c. i. sect. 36¹. the first four general councils are admitted by the church of England by law established : and it is a fact, as notorious as any recorded in history, that all these four councils so acknowledged, were in communion with the popes, who lived at the different periods when they were held. For these respective pontiffs either presided by their representatives at these several councils, or subsequently sanctioned their proceedings. In this manner the council of Nice, in 325, acknowledged the

¹ See note B. at the end of the volume.

authority of Pope Silvester ; the council of Constantinople, in 381, was in communion with Pope Damasus ; the council of Ephesus, in 431, recognized the jurisdiction of Pope Celestin ; and the council of Chalcedon, in 451, gloried in proclaiming the superiority of Pope Leo. *Petrus per Leonem locutus est*, exclaimed the fathers of that venerable assembly¹. As far back, therefore, as the period of the council of Nice, in 325, we see the authority of the pope admitted, and his Holiness presiding, by his legates, at councils, which are recognized by Protestants. In those days of acknowledged purity, when the church, according to Protestant authorities, had not lost any portion of its splendour, the religion of the pope was that of the Christian world ; and consequently it was the only mode of belief, that can be traced to the apostolic age. With what triumph, my Lord, can a Catholic look at the grounds of his religion, when the statements of his opponents, and their malicious charges, confirm its antiquity, and consequently its divine original !

II. But this abused, calumniated, and insulted

¹ Vid. hæc oïa Conc. apud Labbe ; it. Baron. Annal. Eccles. tom. ii. fol. 362. ad ann. 325 ; ib. ad ann. 381, p. 483, et seq. : ib. ad ann. 434, p. 630, et seq. ; ib. ad ann. 451.—Carranza, fol. 34. Fleuri, liv. xi. No. 5. Cabassut. Eccles. Sæc. iv. p. 102, No. 6 ; ibid. p. 160, No. 2, ibid. 216 ; No. 7.

church, not only displays its ancient titles, in opposition to the novelty, pride, presumption, and arrogance of its adversaries, but exhibits a constant and uninterrupted succession of supreme pastors from St. Peter to the present Pontiff : and in all countries which have been favoured with the benefit of Christianity, those only were reputed orthodox who recognized the supremacy of the chief pastor. These are notorious and historical facts ; and to spend any time in proving them by a display of authorities, would resemble the conduct of a writer, who, by a dissertation gravely elaborate, should strive to trace the succession of his present Majesty and his royal predecessors to William the Conqueror.

III. By examining the various scriptural testimonies concerning the church, cited in this performance, your Lordship will see with intuitive readiness, that the conversion of nations was to be one of its distinguishing achievements. Its gates were to be open day and night, and the forces of the Gentiles were to swell its ranks ; all nations were to flow to it, and to walk in its light. Now I intreat any plain and impartial man to examine the historical records, concerning the conversion of nations, and he will find, that this grand work has, in every age, been exclusively performed by apostolic missionaries, in communion with the see of Rome. In many instances, the sovereign pontiffs interested them-

selves immediately in the important work, and undertook to direct the details of the holy enterprise. Such was the history of the conversion of this country from paganism, by the labours of the renowned St. Augustine, assisted by his zealous associates, and directed and supported by Pope Gregory I., one of the most distinguished characters for real merit, that ever wore the pontifical tiara. Before this period, St. Palladius had been sent from Rome to convert the hardy Scots, and St. Patrick to draw the generous Irish to the faith of Christ: with what success their labours were attended, is a matter of historical notoriety. The same holy career was pursued with success, in favour of the inhabitants of Gaul by St. Remigius of Rheims, and St. Vaast of Arras; two eminent prelates in communion with the see of Rome, distinguished by their piety, talents, and apostolic zeal. In the same manner, if you travel in your geographical atlas through every part of the world, ever favoured with the light of Christianity, you will find the grand and splendid work of the conversion of nations invariably carried into effect by members of the Roman Catholic church. What does all this prove, my Lord, but that this was the church to which, according to the sacred predictions of the prophets, all nations were to flow; and that this was solely and exclusively that

ONE church, which our Redeemer was to protect and support to the end of time.

IV. If we advert to the means employed by the members of the Roman Catholic church, in disseminating the light of the gospel, we shall find that the exercises of piety, religion, Christian mortification, and apostolical labour, accompanied the work; and that the divine sanction was afforded by the *gift of miracles*. Our Redeemer had promised this pre-eminence to his church¹: the privilege was displayed by the apostles in the conversion of Jews and pagans; and no reason whatever can be adduced, as Grotius owns², why this prerogative should be confined to the apostolic age. From the most authentic testimony, that can be produced to support any fact, we can shew, that the hand of God has not been shortened; that he has generally drawn unbelievers to his church, by the same means which were used by his apostles, and that to the doctrines taught by his authority, he has affixed a broad and authentic seal, by the signs and wonders with which he has honoured his servants. To call this in question, would be to deny the most authentic testimony of all ages and all nations: and accordingly the centuriators of Magdeburgh, speaking of the

¹ Mark xvi. 17.

² Grot. Not. in hunc loc.

conversion of the Irish by St. Patrick, candidly acknowledge that apostle to have been distinguished *by sanctity and miracles*, and even to have raised the dead to life ; whilst they at the same time accuse him of being the instrument of popery¹. What is this but a frank avowal on the part of the enemies of the Catholic church, that the extension of the Roman Catholic religion, commonly nicknamed popery, is connected with the divine sanction of miracles ; a privilege which protestantism never professed to enjoy ? Precisely in the same manner, the miracles performed by the Roman Catholic missionary, St. Augustine, in converting this country, are acknowledged by Protestants, while they never pretend, that any miraculous work accompanied their “ reformation².” A series of these signs and wonders, in every age of the church, might easily be exhibited to the reader from the most authentic sources of historical information, admitted by our adversaries, as freely as the Protestant centuriators of Magdeburgh acknowledge the miracles of St. Patrick, or the Protestants of England admit those of St. Augustine. The existence of miraculous operations, performed in the Catholic church, is

¹ Vid. Cent. 5 Col. 1426. Cent. 6. Col. 754, 755.

² See Epitaph. apud Bede, edit. Smith. 1722, c. iii. p. 82. —Fox, book ii. p. 116, 118. Hollings. Deser. Brit. 602.—Stow, 66.—Collier. Pref. to Hist. p. 3.

therefore to be deemed an unquestionable fact ; and surely it requires but little penetration to see, that the divine approbation of that mode of faith, in favour of which miracles are performed, is a direct and inevitable consequence. The fact and the reasoning on it I leave to your Lordship's calm and deliberate consideration.

V. Does it not occur to your Lordship, that the very name of Catholic, which belongs to the true church of Christ, and which has never been given to any but those in communion with the see of Rome, is a clear and decided test, by which the mother-church is distinguished. This is the name by which the church of Christ is designated in the creed ; and, as we before stated, it implies universality of time and place, which the Scriptures attribute to the body of the true believers. Those, therefore, who possess this name as their sole and exclusive right, are to be considered members of that grand and splendid establishment which our Redeemer formed. But it will be asked, is this celebrated name the sole and exclusive right of the mother-church ? Yes, unquestionably it is, by the unanimous consent of mankind, both friends and foes. Though the most odious nick-names have been profusely heaped upon the professors of the old faith, by the heat of passion and the virulence of religious rage, yet the attempt to wrest from them the noble and

doctrines, and the unsubstantial nature of their claims.

VI. My Lord, from the whole of this address, combined with the preceding observations on the performance of the catechist, you behold a certain illustrious society of men, called the church, established by Christ, propagated by the apostles; and invested with certain distinctive marks, and characteristic properties, which are clearly expressed in the holy Scriptures. Among these properties, we evidently behold stability, and perpetual exemption from error, as far as *the whole body* is concerned. The holy spouse is but **ONE**; the bridegroom is to protect her **ALL DAYS** to the end; the Divine Sprit is to teach her **ALL TRUTH FOR EVER**. On one hand, we discover a certain class of persons leaving this church thus founded and protected; altering its form of government; changing its faith; discarding the greatest number of its sacraments; new modelling its worship; destroying its discipline. Their attempt is marked with novelty; their plea contradicts the express declarations of the sacred oracles: they exhibit neither sanctity nor catholicity; they produce no mission; they perform no miracle; they deliver a rule of faith which leads to disunion; their reformation consists in a complete change of doctrine, and an utter depravation of manners; their weapons, whether offensive or defensive, are proved to be the igno-

ble arts of misrepresentation and slander ; and their party is split into an infinite variety of divisions, exhibiting a discordant mass of human opinions.

On the other side, you behold a society of faithful, always subsisting in every part of the known world ; tracing its antiquity to the apostolic age ; always teaching the same doctrine, and propagating it without change, among those nations that have been favoured with the inestimable benefit of Christianity ; we behold a continued and unbroken succession of supreme pastors from St. Peter to the present time, with a complete subordination of the inferior ministers to the head : we discover in this distinguished society the four grand marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity : we witness the gift of miracles, acknowledged by its adversaries : and we find it honoured with that name, which solely and exclusively belongs to that church proclaimed in the apostles' creed. All these points are clearly seen, and accurately unfolded in this address, and in the preceding observations : and I now, with all due solemnity, call upon your Lordship to make use of that rectitude of judgment, with which Providence has blessed you, and to pronounce upon the relative claims of the contending parties. Let your consideration of the case be calm and deliberate ; let it be accompanied with the most fervent addresses to

the throne of grace ; and I entertain no apprehension concerning the result.

My Lord, we have been living in eventful times, and we are still dragging on our existence in a period of uncertainty and alarm ; we are both of us rapidly advancing in life ; eternity approaches ; wealth, honours, rank, and distinction, are the phantoms of a day, or the visionary dreams of the night. *Omnes eodem cogimur* ; or, if on so solemn a subject, you prefer the inspired language of St. Paul, Παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τῷ Κόσμῳ τῷ τούτῳ. "The figure of this world passeth away : " the shifting of the scenes in a drama is but an imperfect representation of the unsubstantial nature of human enjoyments. Nothing, my Lord, can secure our future welfare, but a faith working by charity in Jesus Christ. May the efforts of your Lordship to secure the friendship of our Redeemer be such, as to render, by his grace, the future stage of your existence the abode of eternal tranquillity, and immortal triumph ! This is a consummation most ardently and devoutly desired by him who has the honour to subscribe himself, with the highest respect and truest regard,

Your Lordship's obedient,
and devoted Servant,
W. H. COOMBES.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTE A.

Referred to in Page 51.

THE attestations obtained by the means indicated in the text, are on the most extensive scale, and of the most satisfactory description. They fill a whole book of the great work, entitled *La Perpetuité de la Foi*, and extend to nearly two hundred pages 4to.; 406—587. We have there the definitions of synods; confessions of faith, signed by patriarchs and bishops; catechisms and books of instruction; attestations, most respectably and numerously signed; and all these documents, without exception, afford the clearest and most decisive evidence, that the faith of all the Greek churches, on the articles controverted between Catholics and Protestants, is precisely the same as that which is professed by the church in communion with the See of Rome. That the English reader, who may probably be unacquainted with this fact, may form some idea of these documents, I will subjoin, at full length, the attestation of seven archbishops of the east, referred to in the text; the first in order among these celebrated pieces. It is given in the following words:

Attestation of Seven Archbishops of the East.

Those are employed in a fruitless search after truth, who trace not its course to the evangelical fountain;

and labouring to establish it only on the basis of their own reasoning, and of a vain philosophy, widely depart from the purpose which they have in view, and plunge into the precipice, while they seek to involve their brethren in the same danger. This is the character of the Calvinists in France; who, full of vanity and presumption, raise their impudent calumnies against our eastern church, and boldly impute to it the darkest impostures; publishing in all places, that it agrees with their opinions, and assents to their fancies: though, however, their absurd and extraordinary opinion concerning the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, and some other points, has been scornfully rejected by particular councils, assembled at Constantinople, as unlawful, and unknown to the Greek church. For which reason, the most illustrious ambassador of the most serene and most Christian King of France, his Excellency Charles Francis Olier, Marquis of Nointel, having requested us to furnish him with a true and sincere attestation on the subject of the articles proposed to us,—We, the undersigned, have deemed it a duty to comply with so pious and so legitimate a request on the sentiments of the eastern church.

1. In the first place, concerning the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, we affirm, that the living body of Jesus Christ, who was crucified, who ascended to Heaven, and who is seated at the right-hand of the Father, *is truly present in the Eucharist, but invisibly.*

2. That the bread and wine, after the invocation of the priest, and after the consecration, ARE CHANGED from their own substance into the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, and that though the accidents which

remain, appear under the forms of bread and wine, there are, however, neither bread nor wine.

3. That the Eucharist is a sacrifice for the living and the dead, established by Jesus Christ, and which the apostles have left to us by tradition.

4. That the body of Jesus Christ is eaten whole and entire, in an impassible state, by those who receive it, the worthy or the unworthy ; the worthy receiving it for their salvation, and the unworthy to their condemnation ; and that it is immolated without the effusion of blood, and justly adored as God.

5. That the church orders fasts and abstinence from certain meats.

6. That Christians pay to the Virgin a veneration of hyperdulia, and to the saints who are in heaven a particular honour, without diminishing the adoration due to Jesus Christ.

7. That a relative honour is to be given to the images of the saints, but that we are by no means to pay to them supreme worship.

8. That we are to honour and respect the saints as having suffered for Jesus Christ.

9. That bishops, by an order established by God, are superior to priests, who receive divine grace annexed to their ministry.

10. That the order of bishops is necessary in the church of Jesus Christ.

11. That the Catholic church, built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ being the corner-stone, will always be visible and infallible.

12. That baptism is necessary to all the children of the faithful to be saved.

13. That the vows of priests and monks, and the prayers which they recite, are agreeable to God.

14. That the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the Maccabees, make a part of the Holy Scripture, and are not rejected like those of the Pagans.

15. That the Eastern church also acknowledges seven sacraments, as she has learned from tradition.

We, children of the Eastern church, believe all these articles from our heart, and profess them with our tongue, having received from the ancient fathers and holy councils the tradition, which induces us to adopt this belief; and those who entertain on these points other sentiments, are engaged in hurtful and pernicious error. Besides, they **SPEAK IMPUDENTLY, in the fury with which they are seized** against our orthodox confession, and against the Greek church, and vent their murmurs against her with the utmost insolence, willing to excite a belief that she has fallen into the sentiments of obscure persons, and that she has abandoned the customs and rules of her fathers, which have been authorized by the practice of these same fathers, and confirmed by synods; such as that of Constantinople, under the patriarch Cyril of Berocia, and a little after under the patriarch Parthenius, surnamed the elder, who condemned certain infamous articles, published under the name of Cyril Lucaris, as monsters and falsehoods, which corresponded with the phantoms of the Calvinists. And the refutation of these unfounded opinions of Cyril, in which his fallacies were detected and exposed, have been placed in the archives of the great church. Accordingly we, the

undersigned, certify all the articles above-mentioned, to all those who believe and profess the true religion.

Given at Pera, July 18, 1671.

(Signed) BARTHOLOMEW of Heraclea,
JEREMY of Chalcedon,
METHODIUS of Pisidiæ,
METROPHANES of Cyzicum,
ANTHONY of Athens,
JOACHIM of Rhodes,
NEOPHITUS of Nicomedia.

The reader cannot fail to remark the positive and peremptory manner in which this document is worded, together with the tone of indignation which it breathes against those who imputed to the Greek church the errors of Calvinism. All the other documents are drawn up in the same style, and breathe the same spirit¹.

NOTE B.

Referred to in Page 400.

It is really a matter of curiosity to observe the terms in which the first four general councils, at which the respective popes presided by their representatives, are solemnly and officially acknowledged by the church of England by law established. In the act of 1 Eliz. c. 1. ad ann. 1558, sect. 36, occurs the following passage. "Provided always, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that such person or persons, to whom your highness, your heirs and successors, shall hereafter by letters patent, under the great seal of

¹ See loc. cit. p. 411, et seq.

England, give authority to have or execute any jurisdiction, power or authority spiritual, or to visit, reform, order, or correct any errors, heresies, schisms, abuses, or enormities by virtue of this act, shall not, in any wise, have authority or power to order, determine, or adjudge any matter or cause to be heresy, but only such as heretofore have been determined, ordered or adjudged to be heresy, by the authority of the canonical Scriptures, or by the first of the four general councils, or any of them, or by any other general council, wherein the same was declared heresy by the express and plain words of the canonical Scriptures." Let the learned reader calmly consider the inevitable consequences of this singular admission, and he will readily discover by what a feeble prop the cause of Protestantism is supported.

THE END.

